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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

ECONOMIC COMMITTEE — THE BRITISH ECONOMY IN THE TORY PERIOD, 1951-1963

MARGARET HUNTER — WORKING WOMEN

NINA HIBBIN — NEW TRENDS IN BRITISH FILM-MAKING

DISCUSSION:

HERBERT SMITH — MODERNISM IN LITERATURE

HUGO RATHBONE — PROBLEMS OF IMPERIALISM

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Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

THE French attempt to plan capitalism, is one of the oldest in Europe and with the setting up of the National Economic Development Council in this country, a number of books purporting to tell us how it works have been translated.

The book by Pierre Bauchet—*Economic Planning: the French Experience* (Heinemann 35s.)—is one of the best of its kind. The author, whose opinions suggest that he is a Socialist with centrist leanings, shows up the weakness and the raggedness of current planning but nevertheless believes that it has been a success. Further changes, he says, are to be made, however, if it is to progress.

In the beginning French planning was mainly concerned with the modernisation of a group of basic industries. Successive plans have brought other industries and questions of social policy within its scope. It did not, like Neddy, however, introduce the question of wages policy right from the start. It is only now that the question of wages policy is being raised and Bauchet is careful enough to point out the whole thing is shot through with class conflict.

Has French "planning" produced any definite results? The French monopoly capitalist economy is growing twice as fast as the British, but so also is the West German which nobody claims to be planned. All that can be said is that, through the plan and also directly, the French state has been bringing pressure and flourishing subsidies in order to get certain key industries to increase their rate of economic development and they have done so. What would have been the result in the absence of that pressure is anyone's guess.

Statistics of income distribution are even less reliable in France than in most other capitalist countries and the author is not prepared to say which class has benefited most from economic growth but he has clearly his suspicions. He asks:

> "From what angle is income distribution to be approached? In the social atmosphere which prevails in France, there can be no question of increasing output in a greater proportion than wages on the plea that investment—and consequently profits—must be stepped up so as to produce more goods. For it may be argued in crude terms of profits and wages, that in the private sector at any rate, the former might be used in part to increase the private consumption of the holders of the capital rather than to add to investment. *It is difficult to ask one section of the community to make sacrifices from which it will not necessarily benefit later on but which may work out to the sole advantage of another section.*" [Italics ours.]

All in the working-class movement who are supporting Neddy must ask themselves if that is not what *they have been* asking in the years since the N.E.D.C. came into existence.

Our author points to the reluctance of the French trade unions to embrace a wages policy:

> "Strange as it may seem the trade unions are even less eager for the strict regulation of wages. Some of them fear that government intervention would not be impartial. They urge 'the necessity of defending the legitimate demands of the workers even including the right to fix wages by agreement against the danger of a unilateral restrictive system of wage increases which is at present (1961) taking shape under the Plan'. *Besides the trade unions are afraid that so long as the means of production and profit making are in private ownership and remuneration is left to the discretion of those who control them, wages alone would in practice be regulated.*" [Italics ours.]

Unions and Wages

That is the basic objection that all Labour supporters of a wages policy (whether disguised as an incomes policy or not) must meet. So far in Britain they have revealed not the slightest inclination to do so.

Pierre Bauchet, while supporting an incomes policy does not think that it is possible "without a fundamental change in the mentality of the parties concerned and the institutions involved". So he is content that it should not be raised in the planning institutions meantime, though there should be some measures (unspecified) "for redistributing profits through taxation". This is after nineteen years of planning.

The Right Wing trade union bureaucracy in Britain have, however, allowed themselves to be manoeuvred into discussing "incomes policy" at the very inception of Neddy.

Who really controls the fulfilment of such a capitalist plan? Not, in M. Bauchet's opinion, Parliament. It is the bureaucrats and big business who have the greatest share in the process.

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"Organised interests obtain privileges at the expense of those which are not organised and sometimes against the general interests. Problems are settled without parliament; they are removed from political control. The public left in ignorance loses interest and gradually accepts changes of policy by which the Civil Servants and the economic leaders, unsupervised, exceed the limits of their political responsibilities. Recent history has shown the threat of totalitarianism in the corporative system."

On Manipulating Statistics

Governments manipulating statistics to conceal the real situation from the people is one of the things commented on by M. Bauchet. Which reminds us of the double-talk emanating from Neddy in its latest (March 1964) report on the *Growth of the Economy*.

It will be recalled that in its report of a year ago (Feb. 1963) Neddy told the Unions that they would have to lower their demands for increased money wages. The Unions had been getting increases of around 5 and 6 per cent per annum and they ought to be content, Neddy believed, with increases of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum.

At that very moment the money wages of the workers in most European countries were rising much faster than British wages and the costs of production of their industries were rising faster than British. However, Neddy kept quiet about this fact.

Now a year later Neddy grudgingly admits the truth:

"It is true that in the last two years several of our main competitors appear to be experiencing more rapidly rising industrial costs than we have, but it seems likely that they had a sufficient margin to spare to enable them to maintain competitive prices. Their export prices appear to have been rising less than ours. Our share of world trade and manufactures has continued to decline."

Now all this is economic blah. The fact is that British money wages have been rising at a much slower rate than West European and, even allowing for higher productivity there, European industrial costs must be rising more than the British. This ought to be clearly admitted and the union leaders ought to have forced the Neddy bureaucrats to admit it.

But they allow them to change the subject and slide away to other questions such as European export prices are still not rising as fast as the British. Taking into account what has gone before this fact requires a great deal of explanation. Perhaps European firms are content with smaller profit margins on their export trade? The inference that it is the British peoples pressing for higher wages that are at fault should not have been allowed to go unchallenged.

Then the Neddy report says:

"Our share of world trade in manufacturing has continued to decline."

But why? May it not be due to the fact that British capitalism is not manufacturing the types of goods that are most in demand?

Then we are told that:

"Measures to restrain inflation are in train in France and Italy 'we cannot afford to' have more than a very slight increase at most in the general level of manufacturing costs in this country."

This conceals the fact that in recent months, if statistics now available are true, productivity in British manufacturing industry has been rising faster than wages. We do not think that this is a good thing in face of the fact that wages have been rising much faster in Europe.

The British Unions ought to have forced up wages more. But the fact that British productivity has been outstripping wage increases should have meant that export prices need not have gone up at all. The Union leaders on Neddy ought to have emphasised this instead of subscribing to a report which brazenly omits this fact.

More and more it is being revealed that their presence on Neddy so far from helping the worker is actually disarming them. They should be withdrawn at the earliest possible moment.

Left Victories in French Cantonal Elections

On March 8th the first round took place of the French Cantonal Elections—for the election of Conseillers Généraux in half the cantons of France.

Already in this first round, according to official statistics, there were important Communist gains. The Communist Party topped the list with 1,464,750 votes (21.66 per cent of those voting), winning, already at this stage of the election, 39 seats compared to 28 in 1958.

The Party made a strong appeal for unity in the second ballot, the next stage of the elections, which took place on March 15th. Once again there were important gains not only for the Communists but for the Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.) and for the P.S.U. socialists. The *Times* correspondent in Paris wrote (17.3.64):

"Communist candidates, at first sight, have made the largest gains in the French cantonal elections to the Conseils-Généraux, which were completed by yesterday's second ballots in 585

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contests held over for want of clear majorities from the first round. In many districts arrangements between Communists and Socialists to withdraw in favour of the better-placed candidate worked to the advantage of both parties. . . ."

As a result of the election as a whole, the Communists increased their seats from 50 to 100 (compared with 1958), the Social Party (S.F.I.O.) from 271 to 286 and the P.S.U. socialists from 28 to 39. Two Gaullist Ministers and 15 Gaulist Deputies who stood in the cantonal elections were defeated.

The Central Committee of the French Communist Party summed up the lessons of the elections in its resolution of March 27th. It noted in passing the fact that the Party, which received 21.66 per cent of the votes received only 6.5 per cent of the seats, a striking reflection of the lack of democracy in France.

The election proved, the Resolution stated:

"that unity helps *all* the organisations which participate, and that it can defeat personal rule and reaction. The successes would have been still greater if the tactics of unity of the democratic forces had been applied everywhere, and still more if the democratic parties had united on the basis of a common programme."

"*Daily Worker*" Tops the List

The Department of Psychology at Sheffield University produced recently an interesting study of the use of space in the national daily press.[1] They analysed, over six consecutive days, nine daily newspapers—*The Times, Guardian, Telegraph, Daily Mail, Daily Herald, Daily Mirror, Daily Sketch, Daily Express* and (last but not least) the *Daily Worker*—to find out what percentage of their total space they devoted to different types of subject matter.

The results of this examination are rather revealing. For politics the *Daily Worker* was easily top with 12.9 per cent, the *Guardian* second with 7.88 per cent. The *Worker* topped the list for *Features* with 16.95 per cent, for *Editorials* with 2.62 per cent, for *Critics* (art, drama etc.) with 4.99 per cent, and for *Sport* with 17.21 per cent. For *News* it was second with 7.46 per cent (*The Times* leading at 11.08 per cent).

Its "bottoms" were as creditable, in my opinion, as its "tops". The *Daily Worker* was sixth for *Crime and Accident,* bottom for *Society and Personal* and dead bottom for *Advertisements* with 8.52 per cent compared to the 53.94 per cent of the *Telegraph* and to 41.27 per cent of *The Times.*

"All papers except the *Daily Worker,*" wrote Peter Warr and Christopher Knapper, commenting on the survey in *New Society,* "devote more space to advertisements than to any other single category, and for some newspapers approximately half the content is advertising material."

Fatherless Families

Whatever the reasons for the absence of a father, unsupported mothers and their children have special needs. To investigate these needs and show how to meet them is the purpose of *Fatherless Families,* a very fully documented study by Margaret Wynn, recently published by Michael Joseph.[2]

The first startling fact that emerges is that there are nearly 800,000 fatherless children in Britain today, belonging to over half a million families, and that these children account for a considerable proportion of the children living in poverty. About half the children dependent on National Assistance in 1960 were so because of the absence of fathers.

In fact, one thing all fatherless families have in common is that they are extremely likely to be impoverished, with their poverty increasing rather than diminishing as the years go by and needs multiply.

The Beveridge Report proposed that all children should be covered by National Insurance against the loss of a father. But in the event, as this study shows, the majority of children are not so covered. The income of the mother who has to bring up her children without the aid of their father, varies, not according to the needs of her family, but according to the reason for the absence of the father. Her position varies according to whether she is widowed by an industrial accident, by some other cause, is a war widow, or divorced, separated or unmarried.

If she is separated—and nearly half the fatherless families are so for this reason—she may have great difficulty in tracing her husband and extracting from him the support to which she is legally entitled.

Mrs. Wynn has produced what might well be described as a Charter for the Fatherless, covering needs of all kinds from income to day nurseries, but her main contention is that our concern should be with the common needs of fatherless children, rather than the varied causes of their predicament. She urges that there should be a new Fatherless Children's Allowance payable for all fatherless children, regardless of the cause of fatherlessness

[1] Peter B. Warr and Chris Knapper—*Profile of the Nationals*—in *New Society,* March 26th, 1964.

[2] Margaret Wynn—*Fatherless Families,* Michael Joseph, 25s.

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and that the yardstick for the size of this allowance should be the current foster parents fee. She estimates that this would cost about £100 million, and that perhaps one-third of this sum is already being spent on family allowances, widows' allowances for children, National Assistance and on fatherless children in care.

Mrs. Wynn's study when it appeared led to widespread comment and discussion. It is to be hoped that this, in turn, will help public pressure for legislation on at least some of her recommendations.

Judge Jeffreys Whitewashed

One of the principal tools of the Tory historian has always been the whitewash bucket. Almost any prominent historical figure attacked by the Whigs may be a candidate for the treatment, and often a plausible case can be made out because Whig condemnations were usually made in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. An excellent example is a recent article, *The Myth of Judge Jeffreys* (in *The Times* last March), by G. W. Keeton.

Up to a point there is some sense in his argument. There is no reason to doubt that Jeffreys was a good scholar, a capable lawyer and even an impartial judge in cases where his political prejudices and his own political advancement were not involved. Even more interesting is the point made by Keeton about the number of documents dealing with the last years of Jeffreys' career that seem to have mysteriously disappeared. This he is probably correct in attributing to the desire of others concerned to hide their connection with the unsavoury episode of the Bloody Assize after the Orangeite Revolution had led to Jeffreys' downfall. Jeffreys, he argues, was made the scapegoat for most of what had happened.

This also may well be true—but does it really help the case to show that the Bloody Assize was the work not of a sadistic monster but of the whole English ruling class? Jeffreys' own statement is pertinent:

> What I did then I did by express orders; and I have this further to say for myself, that I was not half bloody enough for him who sent me thither.

Iris Morley comments on this in *A Thousand Lives*:

> Not half bloody enough: not only for the King and the Privy Council, but for the House of Commons, the House of Lords, for the Whigs as well as the Tories, the Church of England as well as the Roman Catholics. Not half bloody enough for the Bench of Bishops, for the Prince of Orange and the noble Lords Halifax, Sunderland, Rochester, Clarendon, Godolphin, Churchill . . . for all those whom political success has yet to recall to the decency of merciful moderation. For the truth was that Jeffreys went on his errand not only with the consent, but with the active connivance of the whole of the Whig Party.

Mr. Keeton may find it easy enough to dispose of what he calls "Macaulay's caricature"—but all he really does is to expose a guilty class, for that is what Macaulay's caricature had been designed to hide.

Sir Alex's Hot Air

Addressing a joint session of the Nigerian Parliament in Lagos on March 20th, Sir Alec Douglas-Home made one of his now familiar sallies against the term "neo-colonialism". It is obvious that Sir Alec is rather sensitive about this question, and feels himself obliged to try and conjure it right out of existence.

In his latest outburst, Sir Alec declared that "Neo-colonialism had no place in Britain's political dictionary. It was a slander which should be allowed to evaporate 'like the hot air which it is' ". (*Times*: 21st March, 1964.) Perhaps the most amazing thing about this statement is that it should have been made on the soil of Nigeria, an independent African country in which the activities of neo-colonialism are daily manifested.

As far back as March 1961, the Third All-African Peoples' Conference, meeting in Cairo, adopted a special resolution on the question of neo-colonialism, which it described as "the greatest threat to African countries that have newly won their independence or those approaching this status". The resolution stressed that neo-colonialism is a many-sided phenomenon, and that through its machinations emerging countries "become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means". It further listed the main manifestations and agents of neo-colonialism —puppet governments, federations linked to the imperial power, balkanisation, economic entrenchment and infiltration, monetary dependence, military bases, colonial embassies, "so-called foreign and United Nations technical assistance", military personnel in armed forces and police as officers or advisers, imperialist-controlled radio, press, literature etc.

The resolution listed eight countries which it considered as "the main perpetrators of neo-colonialism". These were the United States, Federal Germany, Israel, Belgium, Holland, France, South Africa and—note this, Sir Alec—*Britain*.

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In Nigeria itself, where Sir Alec was so bold as to proclaim neo-colonialism non-existent, most of the above forms of neo-colonialism are present. Starting first with the increased economic and financial grip of imperialism since Nigeria won its independence, we find the following picture. The two principal foreign-owned banks in Nigeria, Barclays and the Bank of West Africa, have opened between them some 40 new branches; the indigenous banks have opened only 5 branches. No new Nigerian banks have been started, but four new foreign banks have been established. Eight big finance houses now operate in Nigeria. Not one of them is Nigerian owned.

Neo-Colonialism—British Style

Shell, Mobil Oil, Texaco, Esso have poured in heavy investments since independence, and hundreds of new petrol stations have been set up. Oil prospecting and production are a hundred per cent controlled by foreign interests who only pay royalties to the Nigerian Government. Tin mining is in foreign hands, with three-quarters of the Jos Plateau interests in the hands of a firm controlled by the United Africa Company, itself a subsidiary of Unilever. In shipping, foreign firms predominate. About 96 per cent of Nigeria's exports and imports are carried in foreign (mainly British) ships; the Nigerian Government's National Shipping Line carries 4 per cent. Even the state-owned railways depend largely on foreign sources for capital development. Nigeria's airlines, the W.A.A.C. (Nigeria) Ltd., is in partnership with Elder Dempster Lines and with the B.O.A.C.

The large plantations are mainly in British hands, the U.A.C. (through its subsidiary Pamol Ltd.), the Dunlop Rubber Company, Elders and Fyfe. The only timber and ply-wood factory in Nigeria is owned by a U.A.C. subsidiary.

Practically all import trade is in foreign hands—the U.A.C., John Holt, and so on. And even in the newer industries, foreign capital occupies a key position.

In addition to its economic grip, imperialism still wields a big influence in Nigeria through its control of culture and education, its influence over key personnel in the State, especially the army and police, its hand in the country's military arrangements, the supply of "intelligence" to the Government, and the conduct of "expert studies" for the Government.

The Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Rockefeller Trust help to maintain American influence in the universities, while the British Council and the Inter-Universities Council of Britain keep up the British end. It is said that the Ford Foundation is so much part of the Eastern Nigerian Government that it has an office actually inside the Premier's Office and the Ministry of Economic Planning. The Peace Corps and Moral Rearmament personnel are also active.

Space prevents any more detail as to the extent to which the imperialist powers—and especially Britain and the United States—are actively engaged in exploiting Nigeria's resources and people, and in influencing the policies of her Government. All this is what is known as "neo-colonialism". If Sir Alec finds the term too difficult to stomach, let him suggest a new one. He certainly cannot deny that all the activities which are covered by the term neo-colonialist are widely spread in Nigeria—and the same goes for a number of other newly independent states in Africa, Asia and the West Indies.

Sir Alec derides the term as "hot air". If anyone is an expert in this commodity, surely it is Sir Alec.

Death of Charles Watkins

It is with deep regret we have to announce that Charlie Watkins, a member of the Editorial Board of *Marxism Today* for the past two years, died of a sudden heart attack on March 19th.

He was the Secretary of the Slough District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (to which he was returned unopposed on the last occasion), and a member of the Slough Borough Committee and West Middlesex District Committee of the Communist Party.

He gave his time and energy unstintingly to the struggle of his class for a better life. During his period in office as a full-time trade union official, the power of the union in the area grew considerably to the benefit of thousands of workers in many factories.

While being a quiet-spoken man he gave confidence arising from his own understanding and ability.

He was a well liked and respected figure in the Slough Labour Movement, sometimes initiating, always participating in its activities.

His work did much to show workers the value of Communist leadership and the need for unity of all working-class organisations.

As a leading member of the Communist Party his views were respected by all. He was ever ready to assist in advancing the cause of socialism and the party in which he believed.

We would like to express our most sincere condolences to his family and friends.

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The British Economy in the Tory Period, 1951-1963

Report of the Economic Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, February, 1964

1. THE TORY RECORD

SINCE this is an election year, it is useful to look back upon the developments in the British capitalist economy during the period of post-war Tory Governments, before coming more particularly to the results of 1963 and prospects for 1964.

The Imperialist Straitjacket

Our annual reports have repeatedly stressed the fact that the relative stagnation of the British capitalist economy is attributable to the character of the economy itself, to its deep-rooted imperialist structure and heavy dependence on colonial exploitation, to the consequent deadweight of parasitism and backwardness in industry and society, and to ingrained characteristics of the dominant group of British monopolists, stamped on them by their long imperialist history.

Given the will to defend their privileged positions and their political and economic power, the choice of policies open to British capitalist governments has been limited. The basis of the policies has been the desire to maintain British political influence over the Dominions (old and new), to perpetuate the economic exploitation of these countries in every possible way, and to make London a still more powerful financial and trading centre, second only to New York. This has demanded the maintenance of the pound sterling as an international trading and reserve currency against the dollar, and this objective has been given priority over others, such as the promotion of a faster rate of economic growth in the United Kingdom.

Tory Economic Policy

In 1951 the Tories won power from the post-war Labour Government. They were again elected into office in 1955 and in 1959, giving them nearly thirteen years of control. Through the Tories, British monopoly capitalism has had a direct voice in the political control of the economy, in addition to the grip it exercises in industry and finance.

The Tories have attempted to pursue an incomes policy in favour of the capitalists, and have aimed at a more intensive exploitation of the workers of Britain and the overseas territories they control. This policy has been carried out under the cloak of economic freedom. In the 1951 Tory Government's period of office, some industries were denationalised and some controls on prices and investment removed or modified. In subsequent periods of office most of the controls on international movement of finance and capital were abolished.

The remaining nationalised industries were put on a "commercial" basis, profit-making replacing any social obligation which they had. At the same time the social services were whittled away, and private enterprise permitted to maintain or increase its power in housing, medicine, insurance and education.

The cost of Tory policy to the capitalists themselves has been the relative stagnation of the economy which has resulted. In spite of the considerable potential which existed when they first took office, with post-war replacement still not completed, production has grown by only 38 per cent in the last ten years. In the same period, the rest of the capitalist world increased output by over 62 per cent, and the European Common Market countries by more than 100 per cent. The Socialist countries grew at more rapid rates, the Soviet Union increasing output by 150 per cent.

When fighting to get back into office the Tories made much of the rise in prices which occurred under the Labour Government, and pretended to have a policy that would prevent inflation, i.e., constantly rising prices. In fact the mounting war expenditure throughout this period has made it impossible to bring inflation to an end.

When they ran into balance of payments difficulties, the Tories resorted to restrictive policies, which resulted in increased unemployment and, with it, the stagnation of production. They hoped through higher unemployment to deter workers from asking for more pay. When this proved ineffective they introduced policies aimed at putting more direct pressure on wages, over and above the restrictive monetary and fiscal measures.

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Wage "Regulation"

Under cover of the slogan of "economic freedom" the Conservatives have used direct and indirect controls to regulate wages, while leaving the profits of the monopolists to soar. The "Three Wise Men" (Cohen Committee on Wages, Prices and Productivity) have now been superseded by the National Incomes Commission and the National Economic Development Council, but the basic aim of trying to hold down wages has remained unchanged. Under Selwyn Lloyd as Chancellor, the attempt was made to impose a complete wage freeze in the State sector of the economy.

In spite of the various threats and obstacles, the workers have succeeded in pushing up money wages throughout the whole period of Tory rule. The upward movement of prices, however, in many cases arising directly from the fiscal policy of the government, has cancelled out most of the gains in wage rates; this has been especially the case in recent years. At the same time, the rise in wage rates has slowed down, as the following comparison indicates:

	Increase, per cent		
	1951-55	*1955-59*	*1959-63*
Retail prices	19	14	9
General index of wage rates	25	19	9

In effect, the only gain achieved by the workers has been in *earnings* as opposed to wage rates:

	Increase, per cent		
	1951-55	*1955-59*	*1959-63*
Average weekly earnings in industry (men)	35	18	17

The rise in earnings, however, is based on overtime working, bonus and piece-work pay. These all reflect the intensification of exploitation. In the whole span of the three Tory Governments, the actual working week has been reduced by about an hour. When overtime is taken into account, British workers have a longer working week than those in the other main industrial countries.

Growth of Profits

In spite of the stagnation of the economy, the growth in profits has gone on unabated. The increases under each Tory Government are estimated as follows:

	Increase, per cent		
	1951-55	*1955-59*	*1959-63*
Total profits	30	16	25

These figures do not tell the whole story. For one thing they include the profits of public corporations, where profits have been lower, and have tended to drag down the overall figure. Secondly, the profit figures take no account of the tremendous growth in capital values and capital gains which have become more important perhaps than profits themselves.

The overall statistics of production, employment and incomes do not give a complete picture of the development of the economy under the Tories. Obscured by the overall averages are the sharp regional differences which have been exacerbated by their policies. Britain has become a country of boom areas and depressed areas.

Summary of the Results

Economically and socially, the record of three Tory Governments has been disastrous for the British people. The main results can be briefly summarised.

Poor advance in industrial production. The following increases in industrial production have taken place since 1953:

	Per cent
United Kingdom	37
West Germany	111
France	112
Belgium	54
Netherlands	75
Sweden	55
U.S.A.	39
Canada	55
Soviet Union .. .. (till 1962)	148

Unemployment has steadily worsened. In 1950 there was a monthly average of 341,000 unemployed in the United Kingdom (1.5 per cent), in 1962 the average was 500,000 (2.2 per cent). Since 1957 the annual average of unemployment has been greater than in the five years prior to 1957. The unemployed army is growing, though as yet comparatively slowly.

The poor housing record. The Economic Commission for Europe in July 1963 give the number of houses (per 1,000 inhabitants) constructed in 1962 (or 1961 where 1962 figures not available) as:

Soviet Union	11·8
Switzerland	10·2
West Germany	10·1
Sweden	9·8
Finland	8·0
Norway	7·7
Rumania	7·5
Denmark	7·0
Holland	6·9
France	6·7
Italy	6·4
Hungary	6·4
Czechoslovakia	6·3
Greece	6·1
United Kingdom	6·0
Austria	5·6
Yugoslavia	5·4
Spain	4·9

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A feature of the situation in Britain in recent years is the exceedingly low number of houses that are built for renting. The following figures speak for themselves. In 1953 the total number of houses built for renting in Great Britain was 255,788 (mainly by Local Authorities and housing associations); the number of houses built for private individuals (mainly for sale) was 62,921. In 1963 the number of houses built for renting was 124,008, and the number for sale 174,864. This is clearly the lowest number of houses built for renting in any major capitalist country.

Britain's poor wage record. The oft-repeated statement that it is Britain's higher rate of wage increases which account for its lack of competitiveness in foreign markets is a lie. Here are the changes in hourly earnings in industry in the years since 1958:

Increase in hourly earnings in manufacturing from 1958 to 1962

	per cent
West Germany	40
France	35
Italy	32
America	13
United Kingdom	25

Due to a greater increase in production per hour, however, the West European countries did not lose out relatively in terms of wage cost per unit of output. Increases in output per man hour from 1958 to 1962 were:

	per cent
West Germany	22
France	19
Italy	34
U.S.A.	18
Britain	13

The United Kingdom's poorer showing was due to the unemployment and short time resulting from the Government's stop-go policies.

Poor growth of British exports. In 1951 the United Kingdom's share in total exports of manufactured goods by the eleven leading capitalist countries was 21.9 per cent, but by 1963 this had fallen to 15.0 per cent. During the same period the share of West Germany advanced from 10.0 per cent to 20.2 per cent, that of Italy from 4.2 per cent to 6.1 per cent, and that of Japan from 4.3 per cent to 7.8 per cent.

Heavy imperialist tribute. The British capitalists still draw enormous tribute from their overseas investments.[1] According to the official figures, in 1962 gross property income received from abroad was £1,182 million; foreign taxation paid on this was £402 million, so that the net income after payment of these taxes was £780 million. Net property income received from abroad grew from £513 million in 1952 to £780 million in 1962—an increase of £267 million.

There has been an increase in American and other foreign investment in Britain, and the net property income paid to foreigners (after deduction of tax) rose from £255 million in 1952 to £455 million in 1962, an increase of £200 million. From a balance of payments viewpoint, in 1962 the net property income received from abroad exceeded that paid out to foreign capitalists by £325 million. As concerns the British working people, however, the property income paid out to foreign capitalists in the form of profits, dividends and interest has been extracted from their labour—just as the property income coming into the United Kingdom and into the pockets of the British capitalists has been extracted from the labour of workers in other countries.

Receipts of profits, etc., as recorded in the balance of payments figures (even if we accept their accuracy, which is open to question) do not reflect the full extent of the super-profits of imperialism. The size of the profits realised *within Britain* reflects in part privileged access to cheap raw materials from abroad. Here it is to be noted that, until recently, for a long period of years the prices of British imports of primary products from the Commonwealth and under-developed countries were on average falling continuously, while the prices of United Kingdom exports of manufactured goods were rising. The United Nations estimated in a report that the raw material producing countries lost as much as a result of the fall in the prices of their products in 1957 as they had received in economic aid since the end of the war.

Burden of overseas military expenditures. British armed forces are kept abroad for the general defence of imperialist interests; this involves a direct burden on the United Kingdom balance of payments because payments have to be made to foreign countries for the goods and services supplied to these forces. In 1952 the official figure for overseas military expenditure was £137 million, in 1955 (an election year) £152 million, in 1959 (again an election year) £167 million, and in 1962 £246 million. Apart from the United States no other country maintains a comparable level of such expenditures.

Poor balance of payments. The balance of payments as a whole, reflecting the general international economic position of British capitalism, has continued in a parlous and unstable condition. Despite the inflow of tribute, the Current Account of the balance of payments (trade, shipping, travel, profits military expenditures, etc.) has shown during 1952-54

[1] Estimates by the Bank of England, stated to be "precarious and/or incomplete", show the value of private long-term capital investments abroad at the end of 1962 as £7,950 million and foreign private investments in the U.K. at the same date as £2,835 million.

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an average surplus of £147 million a year; in 1955 a deficit of £156 million; in 1956-59 an average surplus of £226 million; in 1960 a deficit of £272 million, and in 1961 another one of £34 million; and in 1962 a surplus of £74 million.

In the whole period 1952 to 1962 inclusive, setting off the deficits against the surpluses, the Current Account showed an overall surplus of less than £1,000 million. Yet during this same period the inflow of tribute from abroad, as recorded (property income received, after taxation, as above) was not far short of £6,900 million.

More than this. According to Tory theory, there is supposed to be a *permanent* surplus on the Current Account large enough to cover, and indeed more than cover, the export of capital from the United Kingdom. Unless this is achieved the balance of payments as a whole must remain unstable. (In brief, the export of capital means the sale of pounds sterling in order to buy another currency—the currency of the country to which capital is being exported.

This sale of pounds must be balanced off by an at least equivalent demand for pounds in the form of an excess of the United Kingdom's receipts on Current Account over its payments on Current Account. Failing this, the export of capital involves trying to push a larger quantity of pounds sterling onto foreign countries than they wish to buy—with the usual result, when supply exceeds demand, the price goes down, sterling becomes cheap on the foreign exchange market and rumours of devaluation begin to spread.

The record of the Tories—judged on their own theory of the imperialist balance of payments—is that, in 1952-1962 inclusive, the export of capital, even after allowing for the offsetting effects of the import of foreign capital into Britain, *exceeded* the total surplus on Current Account by nearly £900 million. The result has been continually repeated crises of the balance of payments.

Inadequate gold and foreign exchange reserves. In 1954 the gold and foreign exchange (principally dollar) reserves of the United Kingdom were $2,760 millions; by December 1963 they had dwindled to $2,660 millions. This may be contrasted with the Common Market countries, whose official reserves were $6,090 millions in 1954 and $18,320 millions in 1963, or the European Free Trade Area, $6,260 millions in 1954 and $9,190 millions in 1963. Britain's monopoly capitalist economy is being run on a shoe-string—given particularly the insistence on maintaining London as a premier international financial centre and capital market.

II. THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1962-64

During the last three-quarters of 1963 the British economy entered into a phase of recovery. If allowed to proceed without interference this would probably continue throughout 1964. Already, however, the threat of a new balance of payments crisis has loomed up, and Bank Rate has been increased from 4 per cent to 5 per cent. The purpose of this is, on the one hand, to reassure foreign capitalists that the pound sterling will be protected and to encourage them to bring their money to London by paying them higher interest on it, and, on the other, to slow down economic expansion within Britain. There is a distinct possibility that the increase in Bank Rate will be followed up by a Budget aimed at restricting mass purchasing power and consumption expenditures. How far the government will go in deliberately choking off economic expansion again will depend —election tactics apart—on how critical the balance of payments position becomes.

In sum, while a cyclical upturn has followed the 1962-3 recession, the basic problems of the economy have not yet even begun to be solved.

The Home Economy

Looking back over the past three years, industrial production, as measured by the official index, was virtually stagnant in 1961, but then rose somewhat. In the period of one year and nine months from the first quarter of 1961 to the third quarter of 1962 the index rose by something less than 3 per cent. This little spurt was then followed by a recession, and in the first quarter of 1963 industrial production was actually lower than it had been two years ago in the first quarter of 1961. The national income as a whole followed broadly the same course. In this period the trend of unemployment was definitely upwards; the number of registered unemployed in the United Kingdom rose from a monthly average of 377,000 in 1961 to 500,000 in 1962, and to no less than 932,946 in February 1963.

After the first quarter of 1963 the economy see-sawed up again. In December, industrial production reached a level of 124, which compares with 112 in the first quarter of 1963 and 113 in the first quarter of 1962 (1958=100). There has been a fall in unemployment, but it remains high, taking account of the experience of previous years and of the rise in production during the last nine months of 1963. In July 1963, when the recovery had started, the number of registered unemployed in the United Kingdom was still 49,923 larger than a year earlier, and in December 1963 it was 107,627 lower than the very bad period a year earlier but substantially above the December 1961 figure of 427,106 (1963=495,412).

The same tale is told by other employment statistics. The number of people in civil employment in Great Britain has fallen year by year from 24,128,000 in November 1961 to 24,087,000 in

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November 1963. Similarly, the number of job vacancies unfilled was only 213,000 in December 1963 as compared with 249,000 in December 1961.

In view particularly of the experience of the United States, where unemployment has become once again a permanent mass social evil, it would be foolish to ignore the tendency in Britain for the average level of unemployment to rise over a period of years. Furthermore, as we know only too well, there is a heavy concentration of unemployment in the Depressed Areas of Britain; they already have the problem of a large amount of permanent unemployment, and they are the first to suffer when the economy as a whole slumps into stagnation or recession.

"Incomes Policy" Fraud

The basic economic policy of the ruling class and the NEDC at home is to push up productivity and output per man, while restraining wages. This pill is naturally given a coating of sugar. In flat contradiction with actual experience, it is claimed that the Government now "plan" the economy, set various targets, and hit these with a fair degree of precision. Starting from this false assumption, an elaborate myth has been created. According to this, with higher productivity the total national output will rise; with wage restraint the increase in prices will be checked. If they accept this the working people will be allowed a *moderate* rise in their living standards out of the larger total output, but a large proportion of the increased production will be siphoned off into exports and capital investment. To round off the myth it is only necessary to *assume* that despite the restraint on consumption, unemployment will not rise because foreign countries will in fact buy the increased quantities of goods available for export *and*, simultaneously, British capitalists will year in and year out buy increased quantities of machinery, equipment, etc., to expand and modernise their concerns!

The Government is exerting a consistent downward pressure on wages, and this to a much greater extent than is yet the rule in other major capitalist countries. Through the National Incomes Commission it maintains a continuous criticism of all wage increases that exceed a certain norm. Simultaneously through the National Economic Development Council it seeks to draw the trade unions into discussions of "planning" in which, as noted, the main content is the need to accept restrictions on the advance of wages and salaries.

In the NEDC the representatives of the TUC have committed themselves to the acceptance of an "incomes policy" which would have, supposedly, two main aspects: (1) wages and salaries not to rise faster than the long term increase in the productivity of the economy as a whole and (2) profits and prices to be controlled so that no group of employers would benefit from rising profits as a result of wage restraint.

It still awaits demonstration that any policy of profits or price restraint could possibly be applied under monopoly capitalism. But, meantime, the Government has proceeded brazenly and ruthlessly to apply a policy of wage restraint. Every wage and salary negotiation now takes place under the Government's "guiding light", namely 3½ per cent increase in wages and salaries is the maximum that should be permitted in any year. At the same time the Government and the employers are rejecting even nominal—let alone real—control over profits and prices.

Wages Restrained, Profits Set Free

The Government are operating a firm policy on wages and salaries while refusing to take any concrete action to limit the increase in prices and profits during the present boom. Discussions between Government, employers, and unions in the NEDC have deadlocked. The Government has laid down principles with respect to profits which are completely fraudulent. It has told the National Incomes Commission that (i) it is impossible to fix profit margins; (ii) it is impossible to control profits in any particular firm, group of firms, or industry; (iii) the only measure of profits to be taken into account is global profits covering all the firms in the economy; (iv) as global profits have fallen up till recently, they must be allowed to recover to their former level before any measures should be taken in relation to them; (v) as profits are liable to fluctuate more than wages, their course must be watched over an extended period in order to determine whether their long term trend is upwards or downwards; (vi) the Government may finally act if it thinks that they are rising faster than wages and salaries; and, (vii) probably the only thing that the employers can do is not to raise prices unnecessarily.

This adds up to an attempt to confine wage and salary increases within a rigid framework, while leaving profits and prices free to rise. It exposes the fraud of income policies, and the unions should have nothing more to do with this deception.

The impudent claim of the Government, and some so-called economic experts, that most recent rises in prices have been caused by prior increases in wages and salaries, has been exposed by the rise in the prices of engineering products following the recent wage increase. *At the most* the rise in wages should have led to a 2 per cent increase in prices; in some cases, owing to increased productivity, it should not have led to any price increases at all. However, engineering employers have pushed up their prices

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by as much as 6, 8, 10 and 12 per cent. The fact is that, with the now highly advanced degree of monopoly, the employers are in a position to increase their prices when it suits their book to do so, irrespective of whether their wage costs have increased or not, and it does suit their book to raise prices in the upward swing of the trade cycle, when demand is increasing. The trade unions should refuse to accept the responsibility for this.

Personal Consumption

Nor should the unions be influenced by loose talk about "economic planning". They must recognise that the workers (wage or salary) cannot stabilise the economy or ensure its growth because they do not control the means of production; they do not control the capital of the country; they do not control its investment.

However, so far as consumption is concerned, the means of action available to the mass of people are very considerable. *In the context of post-war Britain it is clear that their economic, social and political struggles have had effects. By resisting attempts to push down living standards and by using every opportunity to try to improve those standards, such struggles have gone in the direction of stabilising and increasing total consumption and so of influencing the economy as a whole in a progressive way.*

It should be borne in mind here that personal consumption expenditures—in the main the consumption of the mass of the people—account for the largest single slice of national expenditures.

Taking the recent period, according to the Government's figures, after allowing for changes in prices, total consumers' expenditures rose by rather less than 1 per cent from 1961 to 1962. This was far from being a famous rise, since between those two years the total population rose by over 500,000, i.e. also by about 1 per cent. But from the point of view of stable economic growth, and the *sale* of products without which there is no incentive to produce, total consumers' expenditures *did* rise, while capital investment by the manufacturing industries fell by $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and investment by the distributive and service trades by over 5 per cent.

In 1963 total consumers' expenditures dipped in the first quarter below the level of the last quarter of 1962, but then started rising again. Capital investment expenditures by the manufacturing industries, however, continued declining through to the third quarter of 1963, while those of the distributive and service trades began to turn up again only after the middle of the year.

Depressed Areas

Under Tory rule the problem of the Depressed Areas has been accentuated, and the relative development of the various parts of the country is becoming completely unbalanced. An extreme polarisation is evident. Economic activity is being concentrated more and more within a radius of 120 miles around London, while the rest of England, and Wales, Scotland and the Six Counties of Northern Ireland are declining.

The idea that this process is in some way inevitable must be entirely rejected. Apart from its social and political effects, it is economically very wasteful. It arises from the unbridled, anarchic operation of monopoly capital which crowds industries and people into one area and condemns another to decay for no better reason than because this is the easiest way in the short run to maximise private profits.

Naturally there are objective problems—which can and do arise in any part of the country—resulting from changes in technology, the development of new industries, a decline in the relative importance of others, a shift away from the home supply of certain goods towards imports, and so on. But equally the objective fact is that these problems are perfectly capable of being tackled, and for the sake of economic efficiency must be tackled, so as to spread population, jobs and prosperity in rational proportions over the available area of the country.

A Socialist Britain will no doubt solve these problems by national planning based on scientific analysis which our people are perfectly capable of making. In the immediate situation the Depressed Areas can be assisted, firstly, by the fight against the restrictive "stop-go" economic policy and for measures to raise employment in general, and, secondly, by specific measures to bring jobs to them.

Monopoly Grows

Throughout 1963 the movement towards increased monopolisation of British industry went on. At present eighty firms, with assets of £25 million or more each, own half of the privately-owned manufacturing industry. It is calculated that, on the basis of present trends, in 20 years' time, one-twentieth of the firms in most British industries would control four-fifths of their output. The measures to induce private firms to modernise undertaken by the Tory Government—investment allowances and the like—and the further measures proposed by the opposition—discriminatory taxation—will strengthen the larger firms (the monopolies and the near monopolies), increase their power to make take-over bids and enormously accelerate the monopolisation of industry.

Thus all the basic forces of the capitalist system, making for the increase of monopoly, are being strengthened by State subsidies aiming at the promotion of economic growth. Unless there is a change of government and of Labour policy, it is these forces which will determine the pattern of

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British industry in the period immediately ahead and not the feeble, and basically demagogic and deceptive measures proposed by the Government and Opposition alike.

Economic Policy—or Short-Term Makeshifts?

As noted, after a phase of recovery lasting so far no more than nine months or so, the Government has begun to shift its economic policy back towards restriction, presumably in order to try to convince us that this is not simply a repetition of the old "stop-go" performance, Mr. Maudling has solemnly given out that the increase in Bank Rate from 4 per cent to 5 per cent is calculated to bring the rate of growth of production down from the exceptionally high level of 6 per cent a year to the new Neddy-planned permanent rate of 4 per cent. This is to pretend that the Government knows how to make delicate adjustments to the running of the economy.

In fact the contrary is the case. That the state is constantly interfering in the economy is perfectly clear. What is equally clear, however, is that the combined activities of the Government and the great private monopolies are disruptive of the general development of production so far as the interests of the people are concerned. From the national point of view there is no economic planning, only a series of hand-to-mouth makeshifts.

Apart from some slight reduction in direct taxation, special allowances to encourage capital investment, and extra special allowances to encourage new industries to settle in the most depressed areas, the government's measures to deal with the mounting recession in the economy in 1962-3 included an increase in public investment in the nationalised industries and in public construction.

An increase in public capital investment is one of the favourite gimmicks in the armoury of state monopoly capitalistic economic policy, its purpose being to compensate for the particularly sharp fall in private capital investment which is characteristic of most recessions or slumps. As an immediate measure it certainly has its points, to the extent that it makes jobs and results in the creation of useful things, such as houses, schools, etc.

Manipulation of Public Investment

But in the actual circumstances of the British economy in the Tory period the manipulation of public investment has had profoundly damaging effects.

If we take the case of housing, the recent increase in expenditure was preceded by very sharp cuts. There would have been no increase had there not been these prior cuts. The provision of homes is treated not as a supremely important activity *in itself*, but as a regulator of the economy as a whole.

Thus housing construction (local and private) was cut down from 354,000 in 1954 to only 279,000 in 1958. It was then allowed to rise again to 314,000 in 1962, and since then to rise further, as noted, for "anti-recessionary" reasons.

The results of this type of policy are, firstly, that the provision of houses (and also schools, roads, hospitals, etc.) is deliberately cut down for a more or less lengthy period below what the economy is capable of producing; secondly, that people are not simply deprived of improved living standards that could have been theirs but also, in the case of housing, subjected to a particularly vicious form of exploitation based on an artificial market scarcity; and thirdly, that the advance towards the solution of certain social and economic problems is retarded, and the solution of these problems made correspondingly more difficult through neglect.

It is, finally, quite unrealistic to pretend that public investment as a whole can simply be turned on and off like a tap to suit the convenience of the private monopolists. It is now notorious that there is a delay, often quite lengthy and in any case not easy to calculate beforehand, between the general decision to increase such investment and the actual carrying into effect of this decision.

Precarious Balance

Thus in the present case the usual plaints have already begun, to the effect that public investment is going to build up to its real peak only during 1964, at a moment when private capital investment has also moved up.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is being advised to cut back expenditure and development in the public sector, and also to increase taxation in order to prune consumption. The ruling class must not be allowed to get away again with this sort of "economic policy", which boils down to the attempt to stabilise the capitalist economy by attacking the living standards of the people and the public and social services.

The fight against this type of policy must take account of what is now the crucial problem of the instability of British capitalism, namely the balance of payments, and we turn therefore from the home front to look at developments on the external front during the recent period.

Behind all the sunshine talk the United Kingdom's international economic position remained precarious in 1963. After falling from £1,185 million at the end of 1961 to £1,002 million at the end of 1962, the official reserves of gold and foreign currencies fell again to £949 million in December 1963.

In the first quarter of the year the ignominious failure of Macmillan's attempt to get into the Common Market produced a new international flight

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from the pound sterling—logical enough for bankers and other capitalists abroad who had swallowed the false Tory argument that Britain's only economic salvation was to join the Market.

The wave of speculation against the pound was with difficulty beaten off by the British Government borrowing £89 million from the central banks of a number of West European countries. This was only a temporary loan, however, inspired by the common interest of the capitalist governments who feared the effects of a major international economic crisis such as an enforced devaluation of the pound sterling.

This debt of £89 million was repaid during the rest of the year, but the balance of payments was not strong enough to enable this to be done without dipping into the official gold and foreign currency reserves. These reserves therefore, as noted, fell again during the year.

As we write detailed official figures of the balance of payments are not yet available for the whole of 1963, but the general trend is clear from the statistics for the first nine months of the year. These show that, as compared with the same period in 1962, exports rose more than imports; imports were still larger than exports, but the gap between the two narrowed. After allowing for other *current* transactions between various parties in the United Kingdom and foreign countries (including payments of profits; shipping and insurance; government overseas expenditures; travel; etc.) there was a net surplus of receipts over payments on the Current Account of £117 million in January-September 1963, as compared with a surplus of £80 million in the same months of 1962. This improvement, by £37 million, was a little less than the improvement on the import-export balance taken by itself, one factor here being a further increase in government expenditures overseas.

While there was this improvement on the Current Account, simultaneously exports of private long-term capital from the United Kingdom rose according to the recorded figures, and the Government's *Economic Trends* (December 1963) notes that there may well have been also *unrecorded* capital exports. Taking the Current Account and the Capital Account together, there was certainly no improvement in the overall balance of payments position from 1962 to 1963, since exports of capital and government expenditures overseas rose to offset the better outcome on the import-export situation considered alone. In fact our view is that, basically, the overall position can be said to have deteriorated from 1962 to 1963, though obscurities in the official figures and changes in the form in which they are presented make it impossible to assert this.

The precarious state of the balance of payments was spotlighted in dramatic fashion at the beginning of 1964 when the particularly bad trade figures for January were published. Speculation against the pound sterling again started on the foreign exchange, and to beat this off the Government had to shift the Bank Rate up again 1 per cent to 5 per cent and dip into the official reserves once more to bolster up the position of the pound. That the February trade figures were better than those for January is perfectly true, and there is no doubt that these figures, both on the export side and the import side, do move erratically from month to month. But all that is quite beside the point. What really matters is, firstly, that the balance of payments remains in such a rocky state that an exceptionally bad trade position in one month is capable of provoking yet another upset on the exchange market—and at bottom the source of speculation on all these occasions is the nervous fear that the pound sterling may have to be devalued. Secondly, taking a series of months together to smooth out freak results in any one month, the basic fact is that, having improved to some extent in the earlier part of 1963, the import-export balance has now been deteriorating again for some number of months. Imports are rising; exports, if they are still rising at all, are moving up too slowly to pay for the additional imports. On top of this, if the trends apparent in 1963 continue Government expenditures abroad will also be going up, and British capitalists will be sending more of their capital abroad.

Prospects

To illustrate the present worsening trend in the payments position we note that according to certain estimates the Current Account showed a surplus in 1963 of £120 million to £130 million, and may show a deficit of £50 million to £60 million in 1964 and a deficit of £130 million to £150 million in 1965. Bringing in exports of long-term capital, the balance on the Current and Capital Accounts combined, according to the same estimates showed a deficit of £35 to £40 million in 1963, and will show a deficit of £165 to £175 million in 1964, and a deficit of £190 to £210 million in 1965.

These figures are not to be taken, of course, as actual predictions—they simply point out the fact that the balance of payments is lurching again toward crisis. The Government has no new policy with which to meet this situation; the measures to be expected are therefore in the main as before, i.e., in one way or another, the restriction of the economy at home. The reports and discussions of Neddy have changed nothing, for the very good reason that Neddy simply took over the old ruling-class "analysis" of the balance of payments problem, to wit that everything in the garden would be lovely, the capitalists could go on exporting their capital, the Government could maintain and increase its

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overseas military spending, if only there were a big enough increase in exports!

The only thing that can be regarded as new in the Government's policy (and this goes for the Labour Party too) is the increased reliance put on foreign short-term borrowing to tide over each particular crisis as it comes along. There is little room to doubt that such foreign assistance would be available if required. Various arrangements have been made in recent years between the capitalist governments and central banks to provide short-term assistance in face of the threat of a devaluation of a major currency. These arrangements have been utilised to help not only the pound sterling, but also the United States dollar itself and, most recently, the Italian lira.

What in essence is involved here is that the capitalist world is fearful of the consequences should the economic, social and political strains to which it is subject break out in the collapse of any major currency. Not only would this threaten the position of the other currencies, and the operation of the capitalist international trade and monetary system, but it might inaugurate a new period of cut-throat international competition (as in the 1930's) based on the manipulation of currency values in order to make exports artificially cheap.

The arrangements in question, however, are for short-term, emergency use. They solve nothing—and nowhere is this more obvious than in the case of British capitalism, which has repeatedly gone borrowing since 1945, from the U.S.A., from the International Monetary Fund, from the central banks of West Germany and other West European countries.

While this borrowing solves nothing permanently, it has obvious bad effects. Thus it curtails the United Kingdom's freedom of action, economically and politically, because the strings are there, whether this is publicly announced or not. At the same time (as was the case in 1963) the repayment of the short-term loan is as likely as not to be at the expense of the official gold and foreign currency reserves, so that in the long run the situation becomes even more difficult.

A Crucial Problem of the Economy

Events both in the short and the long run are going to ram home the fact that the balance of payments is one of the crucial problems of the British economy, and we make no excuse therefore for dwelling on this question once again in this annual report. This is not a narrow technical problem for a few specialists, but is at the heart of the struggle for progress and for socialism in Britain.

The United Kingdom's balance of payments sums up more or less accurately in figures the economic aspect of Britain's relationships with the rest of the world. It reveals the United Kingdom as a decadent monopoly-capitalist imperialist country, staggering from crisis to crisis.

All this comes out clearly when we examine particular characteristics of the balance of payments. First, there is the regular and very large export of private capital from Britain to reap profits and, if possible, super-profits from the working people of other countries. For the ruling class this is one of the pillars of the system.

Secondly, there is an enormous burden of government expenditure overseas, mainly for the purpose of defending these investments of private capital (military operations, overseas bases, NATO commitments, etc.).

Thirdly, there is the fact that for 100 years or more the United Kingdom has not exported enough to pay for what it imports. It was a very exceptional event when in 1958, for the very first time in decades and decades of history, the value of exports actually exceeded the cost of imports.

This long-standing excess of imports is a most precise reflection of the character of British imperialism. On the one side imperialism has made the British economy parasitic on other countries, taking more goods from them than it sends in return: on the other, the imports excess reflects not, as one might sometimes imagine from reading Tory propaganda, the excessive greed of the British people for foodstuffs and the excessive needs of British factories for raw materials, but the basic inability of British industry under the control of the monopolists to produce an adequate supply of goods at the right prices to sell to other countries in exchange for our imports. This falling back of British industry from its once pre-eminent world position is linked with imperialism and the export of capital, the neglect of education, of the application of science to industry, and the failure to develop the most modern science-based industries at home.

The export of capital and imperialist exploitation have always been and remain a very paying game for the big capitalists. This was also, for a long time, quite compatible with a more or less stable balance of payments position. True, even before World War II, it had appalling effects on the British economy at home, but we had to wait until the post-World War II period to have the development of production at home regularly brought to a halt every few years to ward off a balance of payments crisis. This periodical halting of British industrial development is one of the major reasons for the loss of competitiveness of British industry in the post-war period.

The "solution" to the problem which the ruling class has consistently advanced is to increase exports sufficiently to bring back stability into the balance of payments. The reasoning behind this is quite clear. More exports mean more profits—just like any

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increase in sales. Over and above this the need to sell exports under increasingly competitive conditions provides the employing class with one of its favourite arguments against higher wages, against shorter hours, and for greater intensity of work. Beyond this again, to the extent that exports are in fact increased, this has enabled the capitalists to step up their exports of capital further, and their government to increase its overseas military spending. The real solution of the balance of payments problem, under these conditions, remains as far off as ever—as witness the monotonous succession of balance-of-payments crises. But so long as one expedient or another can be found to tide over each such crisis the chief objective of British capitalism has been achieved, i.e. the whole system of imperial exploitation is maintained.

To accept the "export more" slogan as the answer under these circumstances is to accept the perpetuation of this system of exploitation. Attention is, quite deliberately, diverted away from the real problem of the balance of payments. Furthermore, since the monopoly capitalists have shown themselves neither capable of nor interested in the reorganisation of the British economy, away from its old parasitic and outdated structure, the principal source of additional exports can only be a higher rate of exploitation of labour.

The problem of the balance of payments cannot therefore be dealt with in isolation from the fate of the national economy as a whole. The task is at once to break the hold of the private monopolies on industry at home and to put an end to the exploitation of the workers of other countries by British capital, and to the military expenditures that are the evil companion of that exploitation. The breaking of the hold of monopoly at home will open the way to higher living standards based on the planned, rational exploitation, not of men and women, but of science and technology.

Shorn of its imperialist features, by the same token the balance of payments will find a rational solution; a modernised, socialist planned British economy will have no difficulty in producing and setting aside for export a range and volume of goods that other countries will be glad to exchange against their products.

III. BRITAIN'S WAY FORWARD

The General Election Programme of the Communist Party sets out the way forward from the situation we have described; here, therefore, we confine our conclusions to a number of points bearing particularly on the analysis we have made.

Helping the Monopolies

The Government and the Labour Party both continue to operate within the traditional British monopoly capitalist-imperialist structure and policy. They neither challenge the private monopoly control of the economy, nor the policy which British imperialism has pursued in the post-war period, through Labour and Tory governments alike—the policy of the Cold War, nuclear blackmail, NATO and other war alliances. Both are committed to neo-colonialism, the continued economic exploitation of the dominions and former colonies of the British Empire and of the "under-developed" countries in general.

Both these parties are committed to policies which will accelerate the monopolisation of the economy and increase the power of the great private concerns in industry and in politics. The big monopolies are the obvious beneficiaries of Tory measures to subsidise private capital investment and Labour proposals to impose differential taxation to help the go-ahead firms and penalise the sluggards.

In the same way state-imposed wage restraint disguised as "incomes policy" will enrich the monopolists. It is admitted even by the National Economic Development Council that a policy of limiting wages and salary increases to a "guiding light" based on the growth of productivity over the economy as a whole will increase the profits of firms where the productivity of the workers is above the national average. These firms are in the main the big monopolies.

It is in the light of all this that one must evaluate the "anti-monopolist" policies of these parties, the Tories' projected bill on Resale Price Maintenance and projects for the closer regulation of monopolies, and the Labour Party's general threats—in no way made concrete—against the "great economic empires".

Reject "Incomes Policies"

Under these conditions, the workers must repudiate all forms of so-called "incomes policy" and go forward for wage and salary increases in the form of new national agreements and of concessions won by local and factory pressure on the employers. Within this framework, stress must be laid on raising, in particular, the wages of the lower-paid workers, and on helping women to move towards equal pay for equal work.

The Depressed Areas

Immediate gains can be made for the working class by struggle for the adoption of policies of planned regional development and for the creation of regional planning bodies; for stricter control over the location and character of all major investment projects, including measures to prevent capital leaving the country; for the state directing industries to the Depressed Areas; for the formulation of

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national fuel and transport policies; for the ending of the "stop-go" policy and the adoption of measures to boost employment in general; for cuts in military expenditure, thus releasing resources to improve social amenities, the education and health services, and so on.

Planned Nationalisation

While supporting all measures that genuinely attack monopoly price-fixing, in all its aspects, and engaging in a powerful day-to-day exposure of the monopolies and their operations, it is necessary also to emphasise the transient effects of anti-monopoly legislation, which can always be thwarted by the growing strength of the big concerns and their ability to evade whatever regulations are imposed on them.

It is essential to prepare the working people to go far beyond the reforms advocated by the Labour Party, and to advance from restricting the monopolies to ending their power altogether. This involves the national ownership of these concerns, as the basis for a planned economy.

It is important that the attack on the land monopoly be developed, as the basis for the nationalisation of urban land.

The War Drain

The official Opposition makes no challenge to the still-growing arms budget, which will reach £2,126 million this year and is scheduled to grow at the rate of £100 million a year. This gigantic bill must be cut drastically; at present it is a block to economic and social development. It wastes huge resources and is a powerful inflationary factor.

The burden of the £250 million a year overseas military expenditures must be cut to vanishing-point. At present, as noted, its tendency is upwards; there are new overseas conflicts, the struggle to retain control of oilfields in the Arab sheikdoms of the Middle East, the struggle to prop up the ramshackle state of Malaysia against pressure from Indonesia, the attempt to hold on to the Cyprus base which is intended to protect British imperial interests in the Middle East. A halt must be called to all this, and overseas military spending must be cut forthwith.

The Overseas Payment Problem

Britain's balance of payments situation is likely to become a theme of controversy in the months ahead. Here it is necessary to expose the imperialist basis on which the economy continues to operate, and to emphasise that there can be no *national*, real solution to Britain's problems while this continues.

Tory and Labour policies have not led to such a solution because they are based on the continuation of the old monopoly capitalist-imperialist structure. Tory "stop-go" policies are wrong from the point of view of the British people; but, as we have noted, they serve the interests of British monopoly capital.

Both the government and the opposition pretend to deal effectively with the balance of payments while continuing to operate imperialist policies. This is a complete deception of the people. A stable balance of payments, avoiding crises, allowing imports to rise in a normal way with a steady advance of production at home, cannot be achieved on this basis.

We therefore emphasise the need to cut out overseas military spending, and the demand that, as an *immediate measure*, the export of private capital be brought under strict control. As an *absolute minimum demand*, such capital exports must be kept down to what the balance of payments can stand without crisis.

As regards overseas trade policy the short-sighted concentration of the United Kingdom's effort on certain capitalist countries which happen to be increasing their imports from time to time should be ended. The shrinkage of the United Kingdom's trade with Commonwealth countries should not simply be accepted as another in the long list of the failures of British capitalism to manage the country's affairs properly. On the contrary, the government should be forced to take the initiative in seeking out the practical means for the development of a far higher level of trade with these countries, on the basis of any arrangements, long- or short-term, which are to the mutual economic and trading advantage of ourselves and each of these countries. The Commonwealth countries which are developing manufacturing industries should be offered markets here for the products of these industries as well as raw materials, etc, They, in turn, would take more of our goods.

A similar approach should be made to all the "under-developed" countries. As one of the world's great traders, it is absolutely to the disadvantage of Britain that the trade of these countries should lag far behind that of the main capitalist countries, which is what has happened in the post-war period. *Imperialism may well thrive on the poverty of other people, but the British people cannot.*

Trading arrangements with the underdeveloped countries should in no way be limited by rules established by GATT and other similar bodies, largely inspired by the U.S. government and tailored to meet the needs of the big capitalist powers.

The opportunities for expanded trade with the Soviet Union and the socialist world as a whole are now being understood even by so-called experts who

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previously could not see them through their Cold War spectacles. These opportunities must now be grasped firmly. The remaining bans and barriers need to be swept aside, and U.S. threats and pressures against East-West trade resolutely resisted. Where long-term credits are economically normal and required for the purpose, e.g. the sale of expensive capital equipment, these should be made available without political discrimination. Embargoes against the sale of products of socialist countries in the British market should be done away with, and oil admitted from the Soviet Union on an ordinary commercial basis. Long-term agreements should be concluded, enabling Britain and each of the socialist countries to produce and exchange a whole range of commodities required in each economy.

Fundamental Change

The Communist Party rejects the view of the Labour, Tory and Liberal Parties that the sole issue of the election is to decide what political party can best administer present-day society based on the control of the land and industry by a handful of monopolists.

The vital issue is how to make this election the starting-point of a great political and economic struggle to transform Britain in the interests of a majority of its people.

Working Women

Margaret Hunter

IN the last ten years 800,000 women joined the labour force in Britain, bringing the total at work to 8,300,000. The Minister of Labour forecasts that another million will enter industry in the next ten years.

He could well be underestimating the number. Given the kind of radical improvement in the level of women's wages which we will surely achieve in less than ten years; given the introduction of shorter hours and an extension of the child-care services, there would undoubtedly be an even greater influx of married women into the labour force.

Focus of Attention

In the meantime Britain's working women are becoming the focus of a growing amount of attention.

In the last year, books or booklets dealing with the problems of working women have been issued by the Industrial Christian Fellowship, the National Association for Mental Health, the Institute of Personnel Management, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Council for Children's Welfare, and others.

The year 1963, too, saw the publication of the Trade Union Congress *Charter for Women*, which has received considerable publicity even outside trade union circles. The Charter was the subject of a middle-page spread in *Women's Mirror*, one of the mass-circulation women's magazines.

All this is a significant sign of the times and the changing status of women, for, until now, such magazines have devoted themselves almost exclusively to the image of the "little women" to whom a job of work was a consideration secondary to the main preoccupation of life—"capturing" Mr. Right and then "holding" him by combining all the virtues of expert cook, housekeeper, laundrymaid, nurse, with the patience of the proverbial angel, and the "glamour" of Brigitte Bardot.

Why this growing attention to the problems of women at work?

The answer is to be found in the changing composition of the female labour force, its role in the economy, and in the developing pressure for improved status for women workers.

Women—Population and Labour Force

There are 26,750,000 women and girls in the United Kingdom; over 1,750,000 more than there are men and boys. Some 15,500,000 are between the ages of fifteen and sixty, so the 8,300,000 who go to work represent just over half those eligible to do so on an age basis, while half the adult women are housewives and mothers as their full-time occupation.

A socialist government keen to organise a great expansion of the economy for an all-round increase in living standards would surely draw on this great reserve of labour power, providing the necessary assistance with motherhood and housewifely duties, so that the women could engage in work outside the home.

As it is, 4,000,000 of the 8,300,000 women at work are married women, and it is estimated that 2,000,000 of these have young families of school age. The growth of this latter group as part of the female labour force is the subject of great controversy, because of the obvious problems involved.

In capitalist "affluent" Britain, the mother does not go to work in the main from choice, either for the satisfaction of practising a skilled trade or

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profession or from a sense of social duty (I wonder how many women workers are even aware of the official admission that without the female labour the economy would collapse?); nor does she go because of inducements in the way of facilities which make it easy for her to go to work and at the same time give adequate care and attention to her home and children.

Indeed, the absence of such assistance imposes an intolerable burden on the British mother who goes to work. There is absolutely no doubt that for many it means the equivalent of two full shifts inside every twenty-four hours. Cooking breakfasts, preparing children for school, bedmaking and washing up after breakfast *before* the dash for the bus or tube, shopping, cooking an evening meal, washing up, cleaning, washing, ironing on the twilight shift—an eighty-hour week at a time when the labour movement is doing battle for a forty-hour week! On top of this there is the burden of anxiety for mothers who do not have good nurseries in which to leave their children.

Why Women go to Work

Why does the mother go to work then? She goes from economic necessity. The fact that two million do so in such conditions throws a glaring spotlight on the "never had it so good" capitalism of the 'sixties. She goes to work because her husband is a railway porter, labourer in industry, surface worker at the pit, or in one of the other categories of low-paid workers. This is not to say that the wife of the relatively higher paid skilled worker or professional worker does not also go to work from economic necessity.

In the 1960s economic necessity does not mean the difference between starving and not starving. The worker in the 1960s should be able to buy the mass-produced products of British industry, of his own labour—the washing machines, refrigerators, cars, etc.—and it is an indictment of capitalism that he is very often unable to do so *on the basis of his own wages*, that he very often can do so only on the basis of those wages supplemented by the earnings of his wife.

The working wife and mother is the victim of the capitalists to a greater degree than any other section of workers. She is exploited by the capitalist herself, subsidises the exploitation of her husband by the capitalist, and, very often, subsidises the capitalist again when out of her poor wages she pays large amounts for private child-minding arrangements or nursery fees.

Nor is this all; insult is added to injury daily. "*Teachers' Leader Attacks Working Mothers*" was the headline of a double-column article in the *Glasgow Herald* (December 27th, 1963). The article reported a speech by a Glasgow head teacher at a Scottish teachers' conference. The speech continued:

> "Very few mothers can combine satisfactorily the dual role of full-time workers and home-maker and far too many are attempting it. Any material benefits gained by the mother's absence are far outweighed by the mental ills and frustrations it brings in its train."

It is high time a decisive reply was made to such propaganda. This not only makes an unwarranted attack on the working mother, but questions her right to work at all.

In capitalist Britain today, the winning of the right of all women to full status as workers, economically and in terms of access to all skilled trades and professions, is just as important as was the winning of the vote for women in the 1920s.

Moreover, there is no evidence to show that "mental ills and frustrations" afflicting children in present-day society afflict a higher proportion of the children of mothers at work, and, for Mr. MacDonald's benefit, let us say right away that most mothers would agree with him that it is difficult to do the two jobs satisfactorily *in present conditions*, but it is far more difficult than it would be if the Government gave mothers the assistance they need and deserve in the way of child-care facilities. Instead of abuse, it is a matter of urgency to give the working mothers assistance.

It is outrageous that the fifteen years which has seen this rapid expansion of the married women sector of the labour force has also seen a contraction of nursery services: 1,100 nurseries have been closed down since 1945—one of the more vicious of the Tory economies at the expense of working people.

The cost of Blue Streak—£65,000,000—would have provided for adequate nursery services. The ban on the nurseries must be ended. Let the Government allocate money for the development of a real national network of day nurseries, nursery schools, and after-school play centres for school-age children of mothers at work.

Under Socialism, this extreme exploitation of women, and of working mothers in particular, would be ended. The opposite position would prevail. Under Socialism the woman is able to receive from society not merely "equality" in the simple sense of equal rights with men, but special assistance from society in recognition of the special role she has to fulfil in motherhood.

Socialism realises for the woman the right and opportunity to enter and train for all skilled trades and professions in conditions of equality with men, and the possibility of full development throughout life as a *person*, not an appendage to a husband or family.

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Women Workers in the Economy

A close look at the role of British women in the economy sheds a sharp light on the inferior position and status of women in capitalist Britain.

The vast majority of women workers are virtually excluded from all skilled trades and professions. Even more serious is that this exclusion also applies to the apprenticeship schemes, to higher educational and training schemes which would enable women to gain entry to skilled branches of work and professions in the future. The Zuckermann Report cries out about the shortage of scientists and technicians, but, in spite of the shortage, the women workers of Britain are to be excluded from the scientific and technological revolution.

Here is an up-to-date picture of the distribution of women in the economy.

Of the total 8,300,000 women workers about 5,000,000 are in the services sector of industry. The main groups in this sector are:

1,500,000 in distribution where more women than men are employed.

1,500,000 in professional and scientific services, where they are two-thirds of the total employed—220,000 nurses, approximately the same number of teachers and 10,000 doctors are included in this group.

250,000 are in insurance, banking, and finance, representing over two-fifths of the total.

250,000 are in the transport and communication services where they are one in six of all workers. This is the only service industry where the women are a small minority of the total labour force.

The remainder of this five million are in what is officially designated miscellaneous services, covering entertainment, catering, laundry work, and hairdressing.

Then we have 3,000,000 in manufacturing industry. The main groups here are:

575,000 in engineering and electrical goods are just over one-quarter of the labour force in this sector.

405,000 in clothing and footwear manufacture hold three-quarters of the total jobs in this sector.

325,000 are in the food, drink, and tobacco industries—over two-fifths of the total labour force in this sector.

In the Professions

It can be seen from these figures that where women have broken through into the professions, it is mainly in those that have a distinct connection with the traditional conception of women's role in society—the care of the sick and of children and, incidentally, where the work tends to be of an arduous nature, like nursing and teaching.

A closer look at the position in these two professional fields—health and education—shows the very real limitations on women achieving the higher levels in the professions.

In health, whilst the overwhelming majority of nurses are women, and all midwives are women, women doctors number 10,000 or only one-sixth of all registered practitioners. In dentistry the disparity is even greater with only 1,300 women dentists in Britain, only one-twelfth of the total.

In teaching, approximately sixty per cent of teachers are women. The position is that all children under seven years are taught by women and the majority of those under eleven are taught by women. In the secondary schools, however, there are more men than women teachers and more men than women hold headships in proportion to the total number of teachers of each sex.

British women may have the famous equality before the law, but in the law, as a profession, they are few and far between—four per cent of barristers and two per cent of solicitors in England and Wales are women.

In Civil Service and Local Government we have the same pattern. Women comprise about a third of civil servants, but only eight per cent are in the administrative grades; about half a dozen have "top" jobs as heads of departments, deputy secretaries, or under-secretaries. About half of the 1,250,000 in local government service are women, but there is only one woman town clerk in Britain (appointed in 1960).

Journalism is another profession which is virtually a closed shop for men. Out of approximately 15,000 journalists who are members of the N.U.J., about 1,350 are women, and these are mainly employed on women's columns of the newspapers or on women's magazines dealing almost exclusively with purely feminine interests—beauty—fashion—child care—cookery, etc. In the field of criticism a distinguished few have established themselves as top-flight writers on books and films.

In Industry

Throughout industry, nearly all highly skilled work is the preserve of men, both in the manual and administrative sides, although as we have already said, 3,000,000 women are employed.

A Ministry of Labour Survey published in the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* in December 1963 showed that in engineering alone, although the women formed a third of the workers, they were one in fifty of the skilled.

According to the detailed tables given in that publication, there is *not a single skilled woman toolmaker in Britain.* Contrast the position with that in one of the new Socialist countries—Rumania:

"A woman engineer twenty years ago was a rarity, even a curiosity—today the number of women

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> engineers is 11,000; growing numbers of young women, confident of their capabilities, take up scientific and technical professions." (*Rumania Today*, February 1964.)

Last but not least—a word about the girls behind the counter, who are in fact the biggest single group of women workers. In spite of the fact that they outnumber men in this work, the men vastly outnumber them in managerial jobs, and some employers exclude the women from managerial jobs altogether.

It is long past time for a change—the relegation of British girls and women to the skivvy jobs in the economy must be ended.

Equality of Opportunity

The Communist Party wants to see the establishment of equality of opportunity for girls and women workers, the opening of all doors to schoolgirls for entry to apprenticeship and training schemes for all skilled branches of work, equality of entry for the girls to all higher and further education courses, and the establishment of training and re-training courses for married women re-entering industry or the professions. *Let the girls learn.*

Of the age group eligible in 1962, 22.4 per cent of boys and 7.9 per cent of girls entered higher education courses of all kinds. The percentage of girls among those entering full-time courses of degree level is: thirty-five in Sweden, forty in France, and forty-two in the Soviet Union. In contrast, the percentage in Britain is twenty-eight.

While two-thirds of the students in training colleges in 1962-3 were women, they were only one-quarter of the students in the universities, and the proportion in the medical schools was even lower as a definite limitation is imposed there on the number of women students.

A sample of girl-children born 1940-41 whose fathers were manual workers showed that *ninety-seven per cent of them had no full-time higher education, two per cent had some full-time education, and one per cent had full-time education to degree level*—no wonder we have only a handful of top-flight women scientists, engineers, surgeons or academicians.

When we combine such figures showing the deprivation of girls in the field of higher education with the picture of their exclusion from most industrial apprenticeship schemes, we see rather starkly the contempt in which capitalism holds women behind its façade of "equality", and, more clearly than ever, we see that the women have most to gain from the establishment of socialism:

> "A major operation had been under way for an hour. The operating-room nurses, the anaesthetist and the surgeons were all women." (*Soviet Woman*, February 1964.)

No such hospital could be found in Britain.

We need a revolution in the approach to the education of the girls, to give them the possibility of envisaging a life that is not a narrow choice between the counter, the hairdresser's salon (incidentally one of the few fields of apprenticeship for girls, and so they have to pay for the privilege), and bashing the typewriter.

We need more university and medical school places for the girls and an improvement in their grants so that working-class girls can see the possibility of university without penury.

Let every trade union prepare proposals to allow for the entry of girls to existing apprenticeship schemes from which they are at the moment excluded—engineering, draughtsmanship, etc.

Some trade unions already have such proposals, but the problem, as always, is to win the agreement of the employers who have in the main an inborn resistance to training schemes since these must, to be of any value, involve the curtailment of actual working hours so that the girl or boy can spend time in a training establishment outside the place of work.

A strong case has been made in the Robbins Report for the establishment of re-training courses for women workers returning to work after marriage. This is vital. A return to industry or a profession to do a twenty-year stint after raising children is becoming the established pattern for women as a result of early marriage.

Unless such women workers have the opportunity to take training courses or refresher courses in the trade or profession they had already acquired, then they are at a great disadvantage, particularly in these times of such rapid technical development.

The woman worker who feels at a disadvantage in this way is often the prey to unscrupulous employers who regard her as a welcome source of cheap labour.

The Wages Problem

Cheap labour, of course, is the dream of every capitalist in his incessant drive to cut costs. So beware girls, if the boss says he is dreaming about you, he probably really means it, like the boss of a factory in Sheffield, recently found to be paying girls and women 28s. and £2 respectively for a full week's work of forty hours. When these girls started to organise to challenge this situation the owner locked out the leaders of the strike who are still engaged in battle with him.

This is an extreme case, but not an isolated one. The country is crawling with sharks who seek to exploit women workers at home by handed-out work. They canvass it door to door. "What about it, Mrs. Smith, you can make your fortune in your own time at home." Mrs. Smith takes in the making of

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the Christmas crackers on the basis that she will be paid 3s. 6d. per gross made up. She finds that it takes her three hours to make up a gross—1s. 2d. per hour! Another takes in brassières. This work, done by the whole family, was rewarded with 12s. 6d., which worked out at about 3d. per hour!

Such employers should be reported to the Ministry of Labour with demands for action to restrain them. There are probably Wages Council rates covering the types of work involved and legal action can and should be taken against such people.

As for the main wages problem, the table below shows better than a thousand words that the British capitalist is able to buy a week's work from the woman for half the money he pays to the man:

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS. APRIL 1963
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

MEN £16 12s. 4d.	WOMEN £8 3s. 5d.
	£ s. d.
Bread and flour confectionery	7 11 6
Biscuits	7 19 8
Bacon curing, meat and fish products	7 10 11
Milk products	7 18 0
Cocoa, chocolate, and sugar confectionery	7 11 3
Chemicals and dyes	7 18 3
Pharmaceutical and toilet preparations	7 16 1
Cutlery	7 3 8
Jewellery, plate, and refining of precious metals	7 2 0
Spinning and doubling of cotton, flax, and man-made fibres	7 19 11
Woollen and worsted	7 19 4
Leather goods	7 8 2
Weatherproof outerwear	7 12 10
Men's and boys' tailored outerwear	7 16 6
Overalls and men's shirts and underwear	7 7 2
Dresses, lingerie, and infants' wear	7 15 0
Hats, caps, and millinery	7 4 5
Pottery	7 7 1

How can this be justified in this day and age? It will be noted that, in all these trades, earnings are *under eight pounds a week*. Nor are these the only ones. Space prevents us showing the entire table, which gives details of fifty-seven trades—out of which two only have over £10, all the rest being just over or just under £8. The two exceptions are the tobacco workers with £10 14s. 5d.—a section which is relatively highly organised and with an outstanding record of struggle to raise the women's wages (they have a full-time woman national organiser which probably has some bearing on this). The other is motor vehicle manufacturing with £10 10s. 4d. This section involves a very small number of women. Do the Tories or the Labour leaders propose that these workers should accept wage freezing? How many of them would like a weekly wage frozen at £7 15s.? It would scarcely keep some of them in brandy and cigars.

The General Council of the Trades Union Congress had this to say to the 1963 conference of representatives of trade unions catering for women workers:

> "The average earnings of women remain little more than half those of men. Between October 1959 and October 1961, the average earnings of all manual women workers went down from fifty-two to fifty per cent of their male colleagues and *from fifty per cent to forty-nine per cent* within manual employment in manufacture. In non-manual manufacturing weekly paid employment there was a slight improvement and the women's earnings went up from forty-nine per cent to fifty-one per cent of those of men. . . .
>
> "Pay and conditions deter the majority of would-be nurses from entering the profession and cause many resignations. . . .
>
> "Britain's record on women's wages is one of the worst in Europe—in Belgium the percentage (i.e. of men's earnings) is fifty-seven, Holland sixty, West Germany sixty-four, and France eighty-five" [Our emphasis].

Why does Britain lag behind? The main reason, of course, is the hard and contemptuous attitude of the employers to women workers.

Fight for Equal Pay

The Trades Union Congress first went on record for equal pay on September 7th, 1888, unanimously adopting a resolution moved by one of the few women delegates.

Yet seventy-six years later less than twenty-five per cent of women workers have equal pay and those mainly in public services. Teachers, doctors, civil servants, bus conductresses and some other small groups receive equal pay.

The employers have dodged the issue for seventy-six years, resolving *their* problem, and maintaining women at cheap labour rates by the vicious practice of labelling work as "women's work" with the built-in assumption that it is thereby work for which a low rate is paid.

The technical developments of the last thirty-five years have helped them to get away with this unscrupulous practice, with new methods ever appearing on the scene, but even without this kind of cover the employers have always found ways and means to avoid paying women the men's rate.

I have seen an engineering employer disrupt an entire production process so that the nature of all operations could be changed slightly in order to get round the terms of the agreement with the trade unions which said that women should be paid the rate when doing "work commonly performed by male labour".

An expression of the continuing problem in industry—a problem of outdated attitudes on the part of the movement as well as intransigence on the

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part of the employers—is the nature of the official wages policy for women in the engineering unions which is to get the "adult male labourer's rate" for the women workers. Think of it. A woman engineering worker, having become semi-skilled and operating a machine sometimes identical to that operated by men, is still often being paid less than the unskilled male labourer working alongside her, and is to be content to ask for the privilege of earning as much as the unskilled male. Such an approach is surely not a great inducement to women to join the trade union! It is also outdated by practice and should be scrapped and replaced by a fight for *the full rate for the job being done, for equal pay for work of equal value.*

Discussions under way in the engineering unions to give women a new deal are a hopeful sign, but they need to be translated into action, and surely this is the logical place to have a real go at the employers who are in a very weak position indeed to defend such low wages.

Moreover, while waiting for policy reforms, some recent developments have shown that more money could be won for women workers immediately.

A national settlement gained by the National Union of Vehicle Builders gives the women there a basic rate of 3d. more than the labourer's rate, and a recent settlement at Glacier Metal gave the women an increase of 1s. 10d. an hour on to a rate of 6s. 2d. an hour, plus a cut in hours to forty.

T.U.C. Charter for Women

What is needed at the present time is the development of such actions for wage increases in every industry and factory, the overhaul of policy in the unions organising women workers, and a bold attempt on the part of the Trade Union Congress and the unions with a large women membership to force the employers towards the implementation of the Trade Union Congress Charter for women.

The Charter for Women adopted by the Trade Union Congress in 1963 is admirable, with its six demands:

> Equal pay based on the value of the job done and not on the sex of the worker.
>
> Opportunities for promotion for women.
>
> Apprenticeship schemes for girls in appropriate industries.
>
> Improved opportunities for training young women.
>
> Re-training facilities for older women who return to industry.
>
> Special provision for the health, welfare and care of women workers.

To the extent that the trade union movement conducts a real battle for this Charter, the six million women workers at present outside the unions will be attracted to join and become a new and powerful source of strength for the trade union and labour movement.

The Need for Organisation

The thirty-third Annual Conference of Representatives of unions catering for women workers, held in April 1963, noted that there had been an increase of 48,000 women members in trade unions in 1962, but that 6,500,000 women workers were still unorganised.

The following table shows the position in some of the main industries:

Industry	*No. Employed*	*No. Organised*	*Trade Union*
Distribution ..	1,497,200	163,107	U.S.D.A.W.
Engineering and electrical goods	570,000	98,648	A.E.U. and others.
Clothing and Footwear	407,800	139,663	N.U.T.C.W., Boot and Shoe.
Textiles ..	424,700	116,389	Various unions

It is interesting to note in passing that the increase of 48,000 women members in 1962 offset a drop in male membership and prevented a drop in the total number of trade unionists.

There can be no doubt that as long as seventy-five per cent of women workers remain unorganised the prospects of a radical change in wages and conditions is poor, so women workers must face up to their own responsibility in this connection. Once organised, their capacity for fighting the employers has been demonstrated over and over again.

And it is a radical change in the wages, hours, and working conditions of the majority of women workers that is needed! Not the prospect of a long-drawn-out process of wringing small concessions, but the speedy implementation of the Trade Union Congress Charter for Women, the decisive reversal of government policy on nursery provision, legislation from a Labour government to ratify Convention 100 of the I.L.O. and establish the introduction of equal pay throughout industry and commerce, a shorter working week all round for women workers.

These are not questions for the women alone, the might of the entire trade union movement needs to be brought to bear much more effectively for these aims, at the same time as intensifying the drive to recruit women to the unions.

By the same token, the achievement of these aims would represent a significant advance for the entire working class—not only for the women.

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New Trends in British Film-Making

Nina Hibbin

"THE public is tired of films about politics and the kitchen sink, and of sermons about the North of England as it no longer exists." So said John Davis, chairman of the Rank Organisation, in his annual report last year. He went on to outline a policy of making films in a category he described as "entertainment".

Now it seems pretty obvious that we go to the cinema to be entertained. We certainly do not go there to be bored or depressed. But since a good half of the most successful films over the past few years have been of the sort Mr. Davis says the public is getting tired of, there is clearly a difference between Mr. Davis's and the film-going public's ideas of what constitutes "entertainment".

Mr. Davis, however, knows the box-office figures better than anybody. So the "public is getting tired of" side of what he says is plainly misleading. There is, however, an important truth in his statement. The fact is that he and other powerful forces in the film world (fully backed by the Government) recognise that the "new trend" which has emerged in British film-making over the past few years is not only an artistic but also a political breakthrough; and that is why they are determined to crush it.

In this article I would like to trace the development of this "new trend"; to try to assess just how "political" it is and to estimate its value to creative British cinema.

Decline in Attendance

But first, it is worth going back over the commercial developments in the film industry during the television era, because this sets the background against which the "new trend" must partly be judged.

Everyone knows that cinema attendances have been on the decline in Britain for the past fifteen years and that cinemas have been closing down right and left. Not many people realise the scope of this decline. Between 1948 and 1960 over one-third of our cinemas closed down, and cinema attendances dropped by two-thirds. In the past three years the curve has moved just as steadily downwards.

Ask a film businessman the reason for the decline and he'll blame it on television, adding a general blanket statement about the "changing leisure habits of the public". Ask an ex-cinema-goer why he has given up the flicks and he will tell you "there's nothing worth seeing these days" or "films aren't like they used to be". He will also mention objective factors like higher prices and endless "sales breaks" in the cinema which, coupled with overtime working and the wife's going out to work, make the whole business of going out in the evening a strain on family life.

Put both views together, and you get the joint fact that the cinema does not offer attractive enough films for people to feel it worthwhile making the big effort needed to get away in the evenings. And as a matter of fact television is no longer the main factor, for cinema-going has continued to decline while tele-viewing has reached a steady peak. The truth is that the very policies which the film industry adopted to counter the challenge of television are now helping to keep people away from the cinema.

Better Films or Better Profits?

From the start, the solution was obvious: make better films. For it is still true that when a film really captures the imagination of the public (as *Tom Jones* did last year, and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* did three years ago) the queues outside the cinemas are as big as ever.

Of course, as soon as you start talking about "better" films, you enter an area of endless disagreement. (It is also true that the repulsive Hitchcock feature *Psycho,* and more recently the kinky superman thriller *From Russia with Love,* broke box-office records.) But at least, if the industry had been less in the grip of commercialism, the movie kings would have been forced to ask themselves the question what are "better" films?

Instead, the general question that has hung over the film industry for the last fifteen years has been: How, in view of the declining cinema audiences, can we continue to make a profit?

Ask a business question and you get a business answer. The Rank Organisation in particular has been the pioneer of a "non-film" solution. In his

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report for the financial year 1962-3 Kenneth Winkles, the Managing Director, mentioned in passing that film attendances had continued to decline. But were we down-hearted? On the contrary. "One way or another," he stated, "we have control of the public's leisure pound," and he went on to explain to the lucky shareholders how cinemas were being converted into bingo halls, bowling alleys and ballrooms and how Rank was opening several garages and restaurants on key sites on the motorways. A recent press hand-out from Rank proudly announced a chain of garages, motels and restaurants that would enable British holidaying families to travel from London to Istanbul without once leaving Rank's protective care!

But the solutions sought within the area of film production are hardly less opportunist. First, there were the technical developments—cinemascope, cinerama, 3-D and the rest—mainly imported from America. Some of these developments proved useful and have come to stay. But they cannot beat the crisis. Few people go to the cinema just for the sake of a big curved screen.

Then there were the short-term policies of horror and sensationalism. They made a quick profit from audiences who went out of curiosity, but they only helped to speed-up the process of driving family audiences from the cinema. They have left their permanent mark, however; for they have played their part in creating an atmosphere in which sick and debased attitudes (as in *Psycho* and *From Russia with Love* for example) are now taken for granted.

The main solutions, however—and perhaps the most damaging of all to honest British film-production—have been various forms of co-production and multi-national production as part of the mad scramble for foreign markets.

Hollywood Rules the Screens

The first and biggest development in co-production (if that is the word for such a lion-mouse relationship) was between the Americans and the British. Hollywood was suffering its own television-made crisis, but, having a lot more reserve of capital and stability than the British industry, it could seek more sweeping solutions. Hollywood had traditionally dominated our screens. In the early fifties it began to dominate our studios, too. While Britain was becoming a forward base for U.S. rocket strategy, Pinewood was becoming a forward base for the American film assault on Europe.

American "aid" meant that British studios could produce costlier and more ambitious films, but the price was—American stars, American ideas, American themes. It became increasingly difficult to tell whether a film was British or American. However brave or good or noble were the British characters in the story, it was the American hero, with a word of worldly wisdom on his lips and a gun in his hand, who showed us how things should really be done; better than us at drinking, at fighting, and in bed.

Even in that most British of all British upper-crust comedies *The Grass is Greener,* it was Cary Grant, epitome of the all-American sophisticated hero, who had the English milord role. In Carl Foreman's splendid and heroic war adventure film *Guns of Navarone* the brave little group of British commandos was led by Gregory Peck.

But even the America-philes of the British film industry caught their breaths at the thought of a G.I. Lawrence of Arabia; and perhaps it was a minor triumph for British independence that, a few days after a disastrous press reception at Claridges held to announce Marlon Brando in the title role, the American producer Sam Speigel proclaimed Brando out and Peter O'Toole in.

Over the past five years or so bi-nationalism has developed into multi-nationalism with Britain and America fighting sometimes as rivals and sometimes together for markets in Europe, the Middle East, South Africa, South America, Japan and—to use their own somewhat exaggerated trade term—"the world".

Production for the Western Market

At first it was a question of finding a subject formula and casting that would appeal to some or all of these countries. The Rank Organisation, for instance, had a policy of making dreary, heavily emotional dramas aimed at the West German market, with a few West German and French heart-throbs in a mainly British cast (*Ferry to Hong-Kong,* etc.). Then there was a series of vicious and sinister political co-productions.

Later developments in British-West German co-production have led to hot and heavy teutonic dramas like *Station Six—Sahara,* featuring British and West Germans sex-starved in the desert, with Carrol Baker appearing in the sand out of the blue to add X-certificate spice and American interest.

Low-budget comedies follow the multi-national formula—Eric Sykes and a bevy of Italian lovelies for the Italian market; Richard Todd and an assortment of European cuties for wider European distribution plus some big spectacular vistas of popular tourist spots to attract American custom.

And then, most profitable of all, there are the

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big mammoth spectaculars—huge three-hour epics with poly-national casts, a monosyllabic script for easy dubbing into a dozen different languages, and a sensationalised story to conform to the film-makers' assessment of popular "international" taste. And where better to get the material for such epics—the eye-gougings, the burnings, the tortures, the orgies, the savage battles and the catastrophes than from that bottomless store-house, the Bible, or from legends of Greece and Rome? (And where else are the authors and their relatives so well and truly dead that there can be no question of protest if the original stories are mutilated beyond recognition?)

Films like *Now Barabbas, Carthage in Flames* and *Last Days of Pompeii* have pursued this policy on middling budgets; many of them have been made in Rome with Italian-British-American co-operation. But some have been very costly indeed. Ultimate dead end in this trend was *Cleopatra*. It is doubtful whether the reported cost —a minimum of £14 million—will ever be recovered; and the result is a wholesale bore.

The ambitious and costly British film *Zulu*, with its fierce imperialism and its carefully contrived appeal to Boer interests, may well set a new and dangerous fashion for films aimed at the South African market.

The damage done to honest film-making by this trend is two-fold. Not only is it a question of sensationalist content, political distortion and commercialised values; it also leads to the position where British film producers are abandoning the British film-goer. *We* can go to bingo or bowling if we want to; *their* cinema is mainly for abroad.

The Rank Organisation recently announced that 63 per cent of its profits come from foreign countries; the British Film Producers Association estimates in its 1961-2 Report that of its profits from abroad, a third comes from O.E.E.C. countries, principally West Germany, Italy, France and Spain.

If you have any doubts about the complete dishonesty of this angled sort of film-making, then read its section called "Markets Abroad" which tells us:

> "the other and . . . equally important factor is the impact on foreign audiences of British products such as motor cars, household equipment, clothes, etc., which appear naturally in British films . . . the fact that capital equipment such as machinery, oil refineries, rolling stock, etc., may play an important part in a particular film ensures that these products are also seen by foreign audiences. It is in this sense that it is claimed that the trade which once followed the flag now follows the film, always bearing in mind that not only must the most attractive goods be shown to our overseas customers, but who must at the same time be provided with the entertainment which they require."

What price "kitchen sink" now?

It is against the background of multi-national opportunist film-making, which is called "internationalism" by the industry at large but which can more accurately be described as "cosmopolitanism", that the "new trend" must first of all be judged.

For, as a direct challenge to the developments which I have described, a counter trend has been consciously fought for by serious and creative film-makers who have seen the way forward for our industry in the building up of a modern realistic tradition deeply rooted in our national life.

It sprang from the various sweeping changes that were taking place in literature and plays, and from the feeling for contemporary drama engendered by the specialised needs of television, during the fifties. Behind all these changes lay the new political and humanist vitality which was characteristic of the younger generation in this period and which achieved its peak at the last two Aldermaston marches, and with the influx of young people into the Communist Party and Young Communist League.

The "New Trend" Emerges

Although this new and youthful ferment of ideas found an early small-scale expression in the independent "free cinema" movement, it reached the commercial cinema later than the other media. This was partly because of the length of time it takes to prepare a film but mainly because the chains of commercialism (with so much money at stake) provide a golden barrier to anything the slightest bit new, or to any ideas running counter to narrow, preconceived ideas of what is, or is not, "box-office".

Yet in five short years the transformation has been considerable, as a comparison between the 1963 films and the 1958 films will show. In 1963, about a third of the total output of feature films dealt with some aspect of contemporary life, or with the past in a contemporary, realistic style. In 1958, the biggest category of films were the war films—dashing adventure stuff in the main, with John Mills or Richard Attenborough battling against impossible odds, and only Virginia McKenna's memorable performance as Violetta Szabo in *Carve Her Name with Pride* to remind us what the war was really about. For the rest, it was a year of little sex comedies (about the same

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number as in 1963), drawing-room dramas, cosmopolitan thrillers and horror.

There was one film, however, of an entirely different type. Called *The Man Upstairs,* it was made by A.C.T. films (production company of the Cine Technicians' Union) and was a suspense-story about the private life of an atomic research scientist. It was a "first" in many ways—the first to discuss the social responsibility of a scientist in the atomic age; the first to show working-class people as a thinking and alive force, discussing such problems in a natural and serious way; the first to expose the ruthlessness and inhumanity of the police.

It was not a commercial success for many reasons, and I do not suppose it had any direct effect on future developments. But it was a straw in the wind and it stood out excitingly at the time.

Early the following year came *Room at the Top* —a film which played a major part in changing the course of the British film industry.

Whether you consider it a progressive film or not depends largely on whether the author's and the director's attitude to the opportunist "hero" came through to you. I do not want to argue the point here, but rather to indicate the progressive role it played in developing film trends. Implicit in it was an admission that Britain is riddled with class divisions, and that the barriers between them are very hard to cross.

More than that, it showed that the British cinema was capable of presenting an aspect of contemporary life in a local setting with confidence and realism. In that year of American domination, with the "unofficial common market" in films just emerging, the importance of this could not be minimised. Its tremendous success at home and abroad (helped by Simone Signoret's poignant performance) set the industry agog. It opened a gap through which subsequent productions battled to squeeze and succeeded in widening still further.

Woodfall Films

At the forefront of this battle—and still in the lead—were Tony Richardson and John Osborne, whose company, *Woodfall Films,* originally formed with the limited object of screening Osborne's plays, has been responsible for the most successful of the trend-setting films.

Their early productions *Look Back in Anger* and *The Entertainer* did not make much impact (the "angries" movement affected a section of the theatre-going minority acutely, but had little to offer the mass audience); so that when they decided to branch out with a film version of Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* the industry was very sceptical indeed. Who, they asked, would pay to see a film without glamour, without big names, with a factory worker as the central character and with an industrial slum as the background? The company had to fight all along the line for financial backing; at one time it looked as if the film would not be completed.

Once again, in the event, the Wardour Street men were astounded. They did not know what to make of its phenomenal popularity both at home and abroad. It confounded all their ideas about "box-office" trends. It was the second major turning-point and ushered in a new atmosphere of commercial flexibility.

Not that it was all plain sailing for Woodfall after that. The trade remained doubtful before *A Taste of Honey* hit the jack-pot. It jibbed at backing *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* because it was not based on "hot sex". (That was the only reason they could find for the success of the previous two films.) It shilly-shallied for so long about *Tom Jones* (despite its sex angle!), most costly and ambitious of the Woodfall films so far, that eventually it was an American company (*United Artists,* which has an "enlightened self-interest" policy of backing new ventures and young directors) who put up the money.

Woodfall represented (and still represents) the spearhead of the attack against narrow commercial values. Many of the people who are associated with it, not only Richardson and Osborne but also at different times Alan Sillitoe, Shelagh Delaney and others—were directly connected with the "anti-Establishment" movement, the C.N.D. and so on, and its productions have been the most overtly political. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* posed dialectically the inter-relationship between society as a whole and one individual, showing not only society forming the man, but also man forming the society. It fired public imagination because it exactly captured the mood and aspirations of the time.

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner was less successful in total, largely due to the complicated cutting at the end which obscured the basic class reasons for the runner's decision to lose the race. (This may be due to Richardson's romanticised political approach; there was no such dubiety in the original Sillitoe story). Nevertheless, it was a splendid film and took the politics of *Saturday Night* a stage further. One cannot underestimate the significance of having a lad confiding to his girl-friend that his dad envisages the day when the country will be run for the benefit of the workers and not for private profit;

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or the bitterness of its attack against social injustice.

What Woodfall pioneered, others were quick to follow; some with sincerity, some smelling out a new gimmick. Mainly backed by British Lion and its subsidiaries (who were already backing Woodfall) but also, now the "new trend" was established, through Warner-Pathé, a whole number of interesting young directors and new subjects began to emerge.

It was a sign of the changing times when the National Film Finance Corporation, notorious for its staid refusal to take any risks, took the unprecedented step not only of financing the A.C.T. production of Arnold Wesker's *The Kitchen,* but also of allowing director James Hill and producer Sid Cole a completely free hand. John Schlesinger, previously admired as a documentary director, was able to bring his talents to bear in the feature world with *A Kind of Loving* and *Billy Liar.* Both explored with sympathy various aspects of petty bourgeoisie life among young people; each suffered from a certain detachment from the environment it was depicting which led to a lack of faith in the special ability of the young to break through objective frustrations.

Changing Times

Joan Littlewood was able to form her own company (backed by Warner-Pathé) and come up with the chirpy, bawdy and thoroughly endearing comedy *Sparrows Can't Sing.* Gala Films, a British distributing company, partly subsidiary to the American company Columbia, took the opportunity to go into production with *The Boys,* a murder-suspense story which had a probing script by Stuart Douglass reaching into basic social causes of juvenile delinquency. Although some of its point was neutralised in the course of production, it was notable for the detailed and outspoken way in which it discussed working-class life—how much workers earn; what happens to a skilled craftsman on pension; facts about the housing list and so on. It even depicted (and what a breakthrough this was!) a young worker taking a deep pride in his union card; significantly, he was the only one of the four accused of murder who was found "not guilty". *The Boys* was directed by Sidney Furie who had previously brought a "new trend" touch to musicals with the popular Cliff Richard musical *The Young Ones* and has since made the interesting but not altogether successful drama of an eternal triangle situation between two ton-up lads and a feckless young wife, *The Leather Boys.*

Term of Trial, based on a James Barlow's book, made a half-effective attempt to expose the brutalising effect of press and television sensationalism on young people's standards and behaviour, and had a staggeringly good performance from Laurence Olivier, who has consistently supported the new and dynamic in British films.

Most of the films that I have mentioned so far belong to what I like to think of as the "new trend nucleus"; they have in common (though in varying degrees) several typical qualities.

The New Qualities

The first one, simply enough, is national character; and I hope I've said enough about the cosmopolitanisation process to show the immense value, at this stage, of films rooted in national or local life.

We have had "Britishness" in films before, of course; the Ealing comedies, for instance, or the Korda historicals before the war. The distinctive quality of the new "Britishness" is that it comes to grips with the class character of our national life, and its subjects are people who belong to the same classes as the majority of film-goers—the working and petty bourgeoise classes.

We have had the working class in films before, too; mainly as comic relief. The working class featured more seriously in some of the war-time films, and in pre-war films like *The Stars Look Down.* Excellent though many of these were in their time, the characterisation was usually stylised to a standard form—good-hearted simple folk doing their best, standing up well under stress. Jollier films like *Bank Holiday* took an anthropological view of us quaint gor-blimey folk.

In contrast, the best "new trend" films have (or try to establish) a firm identity with the working-class life they depict, a contemporaneousness of thought, a sense of social criticism and a feeling for the mood and aspiration of people today (especially young people) which is sometimes quite explicit and sometimes implicitly woven into the fabric of the film. They do not state solutions (though they occasionally hint at them); but they pose problems in attractive and evocative personal terms from which generalisations can be drawn.

They reject, in the main, traditional box-office values; no glamour, no slicked-up studio sets, on the whole no star names, characters that are not black or white but have mixed qualities and complex personalities evaluated against the society that made them. For the first time the majority of filmgoers can identify themselves (with understanding but without envy) with the characters on

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the screen. (And incidentally a whole new generation of talented young actors and actresses has emerged to express these changes—Albert Finney, Tom Courtenay, Ian Hendy, Rita Tushingham etc.)

Not, I must add, that visual realism and a working-class setting are the only ways in which the class character of society can be established or points about contemporary life can be made. Joseph Losey has demonstrated this with *The Servant,* which, despite the chaos and decadence of the second half, evoked basic questions about class through the corrupting relationship between an aristocrat and his serving-man, and with *The Damned,* which brilliantly used a stylised science-fiction form to express an anguished outcry against brutalisation in the H-bomb age.

Influence of the "New Trend"

While the "new trend nucleus" has developed into a strong but small minority, it has affected film production far beyond its own confines.

On the one hand, it has forced a certain old-style type of film-making to take on a new look. *West* 11, for instance, was an old-style formula film made with the predictable ingredients that are now considered "box-office"—coffee-bars, bed-sitters and sex. *This is My Street* was a novelettish love-and-suicide story that would once have been set in fashionable Mayfair, but which was, in 1964, fashionably set in Jubilee Close.

A "new look" film of exceptional technical brilliance was the Rank Organisation's own venture into the "new trend" field, *This Sporting Life.* The director, Lindsay Anderson, who, like Tony Richardson and Karel Raisz, was in the "Free Cinema" movement, was enormously skilful in capturing the visual components of contemporaneousness—deglamorised backstreet life, grim dwellings, real-looking people, a background exposure of the rat-race of commercialised sport. In the foreground, however, was an old-fashioned emotional melodrama, magnificently acted by Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts but conceived at an entirely superficial level.

Its commercial failure is the trump card in John Davis's campaign against the "kitchen sink"; and his motives may well be innocent in this case; because he is hardly likely to be able to distinguish between the deeply-rooted class feelings engendered in audiences by, say, *Saturday Night,* and the contrived emotion of *This Sporting Life.* (Davis, by the way, is reported to have refused backing to *Tom Jones*—one of the most profitable films of 1963—because he thought the subject non-box-office, but Rank is now hastening into production with *Moll Flanders.*)

But perhaps the most far-reaching effect of the success of the "new trend nucleus" has been the increasing flexibility of the men of Wardour Street, who became confused about what could be considered "box-office" and therefore opened up a field in which creative directors could deal with themes that would at one time have had no possible chance of reaching our screens, but which could now be tackled with a fair measure of intellectual honesty.

Peter Ustinov's *Billy Budd,* which used an obscure and metaphysical eighteenth century situation to probe deeply into matters of human conscience, would never have been made a few years ago (not without fundamental distortions, anyway); nor could James Hill's odd and sensitive little comedy *Dock Brief,* or Philip Leacock's impassioned pacifist drama *Reach for Glory. Tom Jones* was the outstanding film in this category, although its treatment and approach were so close to contemorary ideas and feelings that I consider it to belong to the nucleus of the "new trend" films.

The new thinking of the "new trend" has affected its opposite number, the mid-Atlantic multi-million-dollar epic, in films like *Lawrence of Arabia* and, far more sharply, in Carl Foreman's *The Victors.* And the whole weight of the "new trend" and of the anti-war and anti-Establishment movement that gave it birth (including the movement's political weaknesses) lies behind Stanley Kubrick's staggering and devastating epic-proportioned comedy *Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb.*

Challenge to Commercialism

I have deliberately emphasised the positive features of the "new trend" and of the new ripples beyond it because, whatever the weaknesses and limitations of the individual films, the whole trend and its undoubted popularity, represents a formidable challenge to the worst excesses of commercialism and formula film-making, to the degenerate values that go with this type of film-making, and its destructive effect on British film-making.

The "new trend" can be criticised for its over-emphasis on brutalisation, its harping on sexual deviation, its pre-occupation with the isolation of the individual and so on—all of which spring from its vagueness about the future and its lack of understanding of the power of the organised working-class. (The anti-hero approach, for instance, need not exclude the possibility of heroism; there is plenty of that around, too, these days; much of it very closely connected to the

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kitchen sink.) But that is only to regret that (unlike in present-day Italy) there is virtually no Marxist film-making in Britain and Marxist thinking has only an indirect impact on British film-making—a reflection, of course, of the wider situation beyond the cinema.

The volume of protest against the Government's sell-out from the unions, sections of the industry, critics, filmgoers, M.P.s and so on was far greater and more wide-spread than the Government could possibly have foreseen.

The public outcry was not strong enough to prevent the sale of *British Lion* into private hands. But it was able to force the Government to choose the best buyer.

With *British Lion* in the hands of the Sir Michael Balcon company (instead of the highly-commercialised Sidney Box group as originally intended), the "new trend" may well get a new lease of life.

But such struggles will not, in the long run, decide the course of creative developments. The decisive factor is the movement itself—that ferment of ideas among young people which seems to me to have passed its first peak and to have become diffuse and lacking in purpose.

The movement itself cannot go forward without a political aim and neither can the artistic expression that springs from it.

For things cannot stand still, and the literature of protest (film, books and plays) faces a choice of two roads. Either it can begin to seek out more positive horizons; or else it must retreat into obscurantism and despair. (The new vogue for "Pinterish" films may well be a danger signal.)

The "new trend" has undoubtedly left a permanent mark on British film production. But whether it will remain merely a routine aspect of filming, or whether it will reach forward to fresh heights and new developments depends on the injection of political perspective into the movement and into the general battle of ideas.

But whatever possibilities there are for this sort of development, the conflict that exists at the moment has a simpler and more basic significance. For by way of summing up one can define two contrasting approaches to film-making in Britain.

On the one hand, there is the "irresponsible" approach, in which film-makers are constantly casting about—as if they were manufacturing detergents—for ingredients and formulae that will attract the maximum number of customers to sample their "product". On the other hand, there are the "responsible" film-makers who respect filmgoers and who have ideas about human feelings and relationships which they want to communicate to them in the most attractive possible way.

The sheer economics of the industry, of course, means that everyone is working for commercial success; but the basic approach makes all the difference.

The bulk of British film-making remains "irresponsible". Mid-way, there are plenty of successful films that represent both approaches. But practically everything that is fresh and vital and dynamic comes at present from the "responsible" film-makers who are growing in numbers and in variety of style.

They make their mistakes and they have their failures. But in general, whatever John Davis may believe about what constitutes "entertainment", theirs are the most richly entertaining films produced in Britain today.

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Discussion contribution on:

Modernism in Literature

Herbert Smith

IT is usual for any effete and challenged society to reveal, almost in the manner of conditioned reflexes, varying degrees of compromise, bribery and division. This is self-evident to the student of politics and only by over-taxing our credulity may we assume that similar pressures do not affect culture. David Craig has shown in his article on *Modernism in Literature* published in *Marxism Today* last September that this certainly is not so; that compromise, bribery and division are, for all their difference of degree, as prevalent in the art gallery, theatre and publishing house as they are in politics, journalism and commerce. They are there, and even when not accepted by the artist, they generate, by their very presence, strained attitudes, distracting influences, a defiant isolation which seems to be the only alternative to the failure of commercial success. It is true that this is not the only alternative, but I feel that it is typical of today; that, in fact, the age which prides itself on its degree of enlightenment and sophistication surpasses most others in the weakness of its attitudes towards the pressures which beset it. Seldom has art received such attention—but seldom has it been so languid in spirit; so ready to be a matter of taste, adornment and titillation.

The Pressure of Compromise

Of the pressures mentioned above, that of compromise is the youngest. It has admitted the rebel to the novel, film and stage, and after the Young Woodleys of previous decades, few of us can fail to welcome the infusion of fresh air and vigour. But there is, of course, a difference between the rebel and the revolutionary, the first being a cipher of defiance and the second a harbinger of change. The compromise extends to the rebel so long as he remains a cipher and continues his posturing. Should he develop wisdom teeth and a stronger appetite then he is liable to be hounded—as was John Osborne when he wrote *The World of Paul Slickey*—or find himself quietly dropped from the permitted band of Court jesters. The compromise does not, and cannot, extend to any body of revolutionary work, and this possibly accounts for the atmosphere of expectancy which attends culture today; the trivia of past decades has been pushed aside by a shrewd young man who challenges everything, has a father who knew what the thirties meant, and does not come from the "better" part of town. He has regenerated interest in the theatre, attracted people back to the cinema, featured in literature that is both virile and popular. But not even he may escape development, and already some further step is overdue. Nevertheless, when he begins to reply instead of abuse he has reached the limit of the compromise offered by our effete society.

Bribery

The pressure of bribery operates at one remove from blatant commercialism and its influence is well described by David Craig when he writes that nowadays the author "is all the more convinced that those who hear him are few or cut off from him because he is bound to compete with journalists, pop-singers, advertisers, who sell to millions". Bribery commences the moment he decides to compete with them. It is one of the brakes placed upon the compromise already mentioned; it endeavours to contain the rebel and it encourages the gimmick, the clever-clever, the repeat performance. It does not often work by direct or consciously made offers, but is an evolved system of restraining those who could be awkward to the society. Once again certain similarities between politics and culture are suggested; the rebel is always liable to be absorbed by the power he is rebelling against.

These similarities between politics and culture seem to be ignored (apart from sporadic references) even by veteran Marxist critics of the calibre of Ernst Fischer. In their sudden endeavour apparently to offer all things to all men they smack of ex-recruiting sergeants preaching pacifism. But at least, as Marxists, they will be quick to draw the right conclusions when the real face of our class-divided society again draws close. Nevertheless, it is perturbing to see Marxism draped with scholasticism and given a supra-liberal bouquet. It is as though a shift in social

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values has been mistaken for basic chance. It is as though the book-lined study has become not merely the scene of artistic judgment but the proposed *mise en scène* of artistic creation. It is as though the term "workers" is now often being used for ritualistic purposes only. It is as though some Marxist critics have exchanged the technique of attack for that of apology. And no apologies are required for Zola,[1] Gorky, Barbusse, the American Marxist writers of the thirties, and Grassic Gibbon—one of the great British novelists. It is not my wish to argue an over-simplified view of the human psyche, but neither is it my intention to underrate the social emphasis or the simplification imposed by the crises with which capitalism is particularly fraught; the need to strike; the army patrol; the cash-nexus; the H-bomb base behind American beneficence. Such things exceed a system of elusive, literary, cross reference, wherein even contraries appear to be both brilliantly encouraged and discouraged.

Divide and Rule

The third defence mechanism of an effete and challenged society—that of seeking to divide or fragment everything but itself—is, perhaps, the chief and oldest of them all. The title of David Craig's article immediately springs to mind: *Chaos and Loneliness*—the condition which any challenged power would hope to find confronting it. In politics such division amounts to a deliberate policy—"Divide et impera". The dehumanising race of competitiveness; division; the widening of differences; the chaos of the piecemeal viewpoint —these also form the bourgeois legacy. In philosophy Matter is separated from Idea. In social life class is divided from class and the individual from the community. Art is taken to a separate and sacrosanct part of society. Form is considered without regard to content. Freedom is not seen as something that is also applicable to the grip of monopoly capitalism. And so on. *Chaos and Lineliness* indeed—from the cabinet policy of "Divide et impera" to philosophers who turn from Matter and tread the infinite but approved labyrinths of metaphysics. This, I feel, is the chief reason for the isolation and chaos of modern culture.

Nor is it surprising that, while bourgeois literature reached its zenith with such characters as Julien Sorel, Ernest Pontifex and Jude, our decadent period can manage little more than anti-heroes, rebels without a cause, and characters who, as David Craig points out, actually emerge from dustbins and sandhills. So far are we removed from the zenith of the classics, that inarticulation has become a virtue rather than what it is—the eternal enemy of art. Almost anything is allowed—from meaningless marks on canvases to darkened stages—so long as it supports a certain cultural snobbery, may subsequently become a commodity—and so long as it does not, in the manner of the "square" and "wearisome" classics, concern itself with truth, reality, comment or humanism.

The Alternative

I should like to reiterate that I am not suggesting that the defence measures of our decadent society are, outside of commerce, conducted or received with the full realisation of what they amount to. I am not suggesting that there is in operation a sort of Machiavellian civil service for the defence of bourgeois culture. Nor do I suggest that certain artists consciously "go over" to the Establishment. I am suggesting, however, that the middle class, in its capacity of first lieutenant to the bourgeoisie, is often guilty of carrying out "restrictive practices" on its behalf in the universities, B.B.C., editorial offices, art galleries and theatres. In this I am but extending a complaint made by the Labour Party when it was in power: "We take the shortcomings in the B.B.C.'s handling of social and economic questions to be the result, in part, of a certain social bias among many members of its staff deriving no doubt from too narrow a field of recruitment." I also suggest that modern artists are guilty of a curious lack of adventurousness. Great spheres of experience remain neglected in our society—and still the artist allows himself to be cloistered, together with his "formal problems", in a right-hand corner of that society. I would suggest, finally, that in this period of what is generally considered

[1] *Ernst Fischer* (*The Necessity of Art*): ". . . he [Zola] did not recognise the class struggle or the trends of social development. . . ."
Zola—to the workers' associations (quoted by Marc Bernard): ". . . one thing is certain . . . the future of society is in the reorganisation of labour, and from that reorganisation will come, at last, a just distribution of wealth. . . ."
Ernst Fischer (*Marxism Today*, Feb. 1964): "The eternally shipwrecked but ever hopeful Odysseus, his return home as a stranger . . . these . . . and their representation . . . are as gripping today as they were thousands of years ago. . . . What are transitory are the social character masks—the aristocrat, the plebeian, the bourgeois, the proletarian. . . ."
Zola—quoted by Prof. Hemmings: "If anyone wanted today to write a work directly inspired from antiquity, he would have to take the working men and the farm-labourers of our country for models. . . . *Our peasants and factory-hands are the only men with the simple, stalwart bearing of the heroes of Homer. . . .*"
Cases in point?

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to be second-rate culture, those who practise it might at least wonder whether the philosophy they have so frequently been warned against is not indeed the extra strength and the wider vision which their work lacks.

Our bourgeois society can no longer inspire us; it dispenses, instead, the cold, dead touch of division, the artificial "kicks" of commerce, illusion, despair and isolation. All this is reflected in our culture. In my view the only alternative is that philosophy—at present maligned and misrepresented—which, in the tradition of the Greek materialists and the great Fifth Dialogue of Bruno, can restore a sense of wholeness to existence. From this sense, this realisation of the dynamic interdependence of all things, will come the inspiration which the piecemeal tactics of an effete society can no longer give. It is the real alternative to the present-day culture of hollow rebelliousness and plaintive introspection. I believe, with David Craig, that a dynamic Marxism offers this alternative.

Problems of Imperialism: A Correction

Hugo Rathbone

A FURTHER study of the copious Definitions and Notes to the National Income and Expenditure Blue Book for 1963 apparently reveals that I made a somewhat serious error in the table I gave last month in my contribution to the *Problems of Imperialism,* resulting in certain overestimates in my conclusions.

I say "apparently", because in the Blue Book, owing to two seemingly contradictory statements (which I have queried in a letter to the Central Statistical Office, the compiler of the Blue Book, but have not yet received a reply), it is still a bit uncertain whether I was correct or not. This confusing situation relates to my exclusion of "non-trading income". For in the Blue Book I now find that, though in one section it is flatly stated, as indeed was the previous practice, that this item was *not* included in the total of "income earned abroad", yet in another place, after explaining the recently made revisions in the whole basis of this latter item, it states that "non-trading income" has been divided and that proportion that is earned abroad has *now* been included under the heading *Income earned Abroad,* the remainder being given under a separate heading *Non-trading Income earned in the U.K.,* a heading that existed in previous years.

Consequently this means that some of the totals and of the percentages in the table I gave must be revised. For instance, the grand total of gross profits earned in the U.K. and abroad must now be £5,364 million for 1962 (instead of the £4,603 million I gave), and the percentage of income earned abroad to this total of gross profits must be, for the same year 1962, 20 per cent (instead of the 23.3 per cent figure I gave). The totals and percentages, of course, must also be similarly revised for the previous years, varying, in the case of the percentages, from 20.5 per cent in 1953 instead of 23.1 per cent as given, to the highest percentage figure 21.8 per cent in 1958 instead of the 25 per cent as given.

Finally in the sentence in the last paragraph of my contribution reading "This makes the percentage of tribute from abroad equal to about a third of the total bill of British capitalist exploitation", the word "third" should now read "well over a quarter". That is assuming that the total bill for overseas exploitation is really about £1,500 million in 1962, as I explained in my contribution, and not merely the £1,072 as given in the table I compiled, if account is taken of other overseas city earnings, commissions, banking services etc. as well as an estimate for super profits. This "well over a quarter" percentage is still ever so much greater than is the estimate of one-thirtieth as put forward by Mr. Barratt Brown in his vain efforts to prove that British imperialism no longer draws any significant tribute from abroad as suggested in his recent book *After Imperialism* and, as seemingly accepted by James Harvey in his contribution to the February issue.

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At the end of May there will be published a new two-volume edition of the work of the great Russian physiologist I. P. Pavlov—*Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes*. The first volume contains the famous lectures given by Pavlov from 1903 to 1928; in the second volume are his later lectures, devoted particularly to the problems of psychiatry. The cost of the two volumes is three guineas.

There will also be appearing the volume of *Diderot's Selected Writings*, edited by Jonathan Kemp (40s.), mentioned in earlier notices in "Marxism Today".

Two new publications came out last month—the new "Socialism Today" booklet *The British Economy* by William Mennell (3s. 6d.), and the centenary collection of essays edited by Arnold Kettle, *Shakespeare in a Changing World* (36s.).

This month John Gollan's contribution to the volume *The Challenge of Marxism* (still on sale at 21s.), on "Democracy and Class Struggle", is reprinted as a separate pamphlet, price 2s.

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